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Assessment Policy

This policy was fully reorganised and redrafted in May 2023 following an overall review of our Special Education Policy, Special Needs Policy, the creation of an EAL Policy and the review and reorganisation of our SEN Testing Materials

Rationale

The core of this policy is that all children should work to their individual potential and experience success at school. We endeavour to identify children who may have learning difficulties or those who are highly able at the earliest possible opportunity, and put in place a programme to respond to their needs.

An effective assessment policy is central to this core objective. This policy covers both Assessment of Learning (AOL), which is summative assessment - assessing how well children perform after a specified period e.g. Standardised Testing, and Assessment for Learning (AFL), which is continuous formative assessment and is used to determine future planning and teaching goals.

Relationship to School Ethos

Whitegate National School adopts a holistic approach to the education and development of each child and the enhancement of teaching and learning processes. An effective Assessment Policy identifies early interventions that need to be put in place to ensure that each child reaches his/her potential and positive self-esteem is achieved.

Aims and Objectives

- To facilitate improved teaching and pupil learning
- To target needs and strengths
- To create a procedure for monitoring progress and achievement
- To identify alternative teaching and learning initiatives and learning processes which assist the long-term and short-term planning of teachers
- To co-ordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis, including storage of test and results and reporting of same.

Forms of Assessment

There are three main types of assessment – formative, summative and evaluative.

1. **Formative:** Covering a range of formal and informal assessments and enabling the teacher to modify the teaching and learning activities to improve child's attainment. This includes self-assessment strategies. Formative Assessment is Assessment FOR learning.
2. **Summative:** Using teacher designed tasks and tests to provide information about the achievement of learning targets. This is Assessment OF learning.
3. **Evaluative:** Focusing on the achievements of the school i.e. the teaching and the learning that is taking place. This is Assessment OF Learning.

Assessment Techniques

- Teacher Observation (focused, continuous, informed and structured)
- Teacher designed tasks and tests; weekly and termly tests, projects, reports and homework.
- Self-Assessment and Group Feedback
- Discussion / Conferencing
- Checklists / Rating Scales
- Event Recording
- Portfolios / Projects
- Standardised testing
- Diagnostic Testing

Curricular Assessment

Each subject area on the curriculum has its own assessment criteria recorded in the Plan Scoile. The criteria cover the assessment of each of the strands of the individual subject areas.

Continuum of support process.

Stage 1- Classroom Support

Stage 2- School Support

Stage 3- School Support Plus

Stage 1- CLASSROOM SUPPORT

- Parent/Teacher share concerns and these concerns are recorded.
- Simple informal problem-solving approaches commonly used by class teachers to support emerging needs are identified.
- Support Plan is drawn up for the school term. The success of the plan is recorded on an ongoing basis.
- After 1 or 2 terms, if concerns remain, the teacher requests the involvement of SET teacher. Pupil moves to Stage 2.

Stage 2- SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Class teacher/SET teacher/parent re-assesses the child's needs.
- School Support Plan is drawn up and this will involve a more systematic gathering of information and development and monitoring of the School Support Plan.
- Depending on the time of year, this plan is periodically reviewed and monitored.
- Depending on the nature of the needs, the additional teaching will be within a small group or on an individual basis or a combination of both either in class or on a withdrawal basis.
- If concerns still remain, the pupil moves to Stage 3

Stage 3- SCHOOL SUPPORT PLUS

- This stage applies where the needs are enduring and/or severe and complex and where progress is considered inadequate despite carefully planned and reviewed interventions.
- Parent/teacher/Educational Psychologist/Child
- School formally requests a consultation/referral with Educational Psychologist.

- A new cycle of consultation, assessment, planning involving all concerned begins.
- A detailed IEP/IPLP, identifying agreed interventions and actions is drawn up.
- This review process will be ongoing.
- Decision with regard to support and allocation of resources may be made at this stage if appropriate.

A pupil, depending on the nature of their need can progress through these stages quicker.

School Administered Diagnostic Tests

In addition to the formal Standardised Tests we use a variety of diagnostic tests, where appropriate.

- YARC- York Assessment of Reading Comprehension
- WIAT- Wide Range Intelligence Test
- Diagnostic Spellings Test
- PM Benchmark Levelling Kit

Screening/ Diagnostic

The following tests are used to in Whitegate NS

	Name of Assessment	Class	Time of Year
1.	Pre-School Profile	Juniors	On enrolment/ Discussions with Preschool etc
2.	Belfield Infant Screening Test	Junior Infants	(Term 5 of School- Complete in March or April, before Easter Holidays)
3.	Jolly Phonics Assessment Checklists	Junior and Senior Infants	Periodically by Class Teacher and SETs
4.	MIST (Middle Infant Screening Test)	Seniors	(Term 5 of School- Complete in March or April, before Easter Holidays)
5.	Drumcondra Early Numeracy Test	Senior Infants	May (Week 1 of May)
6.	Drumcondra Early Literacy Test	Senior Infants	May (Week 1 of May)
7.	Drumcondra Spelling Test	First – Sixth Classes	May (Week 2 of May)
8.	Drumcondra Reading Test	First – Sixth Classes	May (Week 3 of May)
9.	Drumcondra Maths Test	First – Sixth Classes	May (Week 4 of May)
10.	PSAK (Primary School assessment Kit)	EAL Pupils	On Enrolment and Review periodically
11.	YARC Reading Test	CS/SS/SSP Pupils	As necessary
12.	NEPS Checklists	CS/SS/SSP Pupils	As necessary
13.	NEPs “My Thoughts About School” assessment	CS/SS/SSP Pupils	As necessary
14.	Gross and Fine Motor Checklists (HSE)	CS/SS/SSP Pupils	As necessary

15	Diagnostic Spelling Test	CS/SS/SSP Pupils	As necessary
16	WIAT III (Purchased May 2023)	CS/SS/SSP Pupils	As necessary

Test Procedure

Administration and Correction

- Tests are administered and corrected by both the Special Education Teachers and Class Teachers.
- Corrected results are uploaded to the Aladdin system by the teacher who conducted the test. This is overseen by the most senior member of SET Team.

Exclusion from Tests

- Pupils may be excluded from the tests if in the view of the Principal, and in line with DES guidance, they have a learning, communicative or physical disability which would prevent them from attempting the test.
- Children may also be excluded if their level of English is such that attempting the test would be inappropriate. On advice from the NCCA, testing of pupils can take place with accommodations, but can not be used in any official reporting.

Recording

- Test results will be recorded electronically (via the school data system Aladdin) A class score sheet is available electronically on Aladdin and will be downloaded for the SET file and reviewed by the Principal and SET Team when looking at supports needed for children after annual standardised testing is completed.
- The Special Education Teacher will retain a copy for the purpose of further diagnostic testing and tracking of results.

Tracking

- Results of tests are tracked from year to year using percentile scores and kept on file by the Special Education Teachers

Storage

- Test results are stored digitally, using the school data system Aladdin.
- Test booklets are stored for 12 months in a secure filing cabinet in the central storage area, until replaced by the following year's test. The test booklets are then shredded.
- Results are kept as per Whitegate NS Data Protection & Record Keeping Policy – until the pupils have reached aged 26, and then shredded

Reporting of Results

- Children are not given the results of tests.
- Results of standardised tests are reported to parents via the end of year School Report Card.
- Where a concern arises about a child's test results the Class Teacher or SET will make contact with parents to discuss the concern.
- In the case of children attending the Special Education Teachers results are given during the formulation/review of the child's School Support Plan.
- Where children are transferring to other Primary Schools or Secondary schools results may be forwarded to them without permission from parents.
- The school will report aggregate Standardised test results for 2nd, 4th and 6th Class (via EsiNet) once annually to the Department of Education.

Test Analysis.

- Test results will be analysed by the Class Teachers and the Special Education Teachers and discussed on a whole-school basis. These results will be used to both monitor the child's progress and to inform classroom planning. (The results may also be used in the school's self-evaluation process)

Note: Parents are not given copies of the test. The Class Teacher may show the completed test booklet to parents if requested, and if this is appropriate in individual circumstances. A parent may view their child's booklet in the presence of the teacher. No photographs are permitted.

Diagnostic Assessment

- Special Education Teachers administer any Diagnostic Test deemed necessary. In house diagnostic testing takes place following classroom intervention and the completion of the Classroom Support Plan (as per staged approach) and following referral by the Class Teacher in consultation with parents.
- A suitable diagnostic test from the list above will be chosen by the Special Education Teacher in consultation with the Class Teacher. The Administration of such tests is in keeping with Circulars 02/05, 0014/2017 and 0018/2021, where a staged approach is used by individual Class Teacher before recourse to diagnostic testing or psychological assessment.

Psychological Assessment

A psychological Assessment may be recommended in order to provide us with:

- Additional information about a child's difficulties.
- Advice about teaching strategies and resources.
- Assistance in applying for other support e.g. Special Needs Assistants.

A Psychological Assessment is recommended where:

- The results of diagnostic testing carried out by the Special Education Teacher warrant further assessment and a Special Education condition, learning disability or specific learning difficulty is suspected.
- Having initiated a School Support Plan with a child, little progress is taking place.
- There appears to be a marked discrepancy between perceived ability and performance.
- There are several emotional and / or behavioural problems.

Provision of Psychological Assessment

- Psychological Assessments may be done privately or done through the school. The school is assigned a school psychologist through NEPS scheme (National Educational Psychological Service). Our current school psychologist is Eleanor Mythen (2022-2023)
- In the event of our Educational Psychologist not being available (e.g. Maternity leave) the school then has access to psychological assessments through the Scheme for Commissioning Psychological Assessments SCPA, which is administered by NEPS. The number of educational assessments provided under this scheme is at the discretion of NEPS.
- Parents may choose to arrange an assessment privately through a private Educational Psychologist or other agency.

Procedure for Psychological Assessment

1. Class Teacher in consultation with the Special Education Teacher and Principal meet to discuss pupils who may warrant an assessment and a priorities are agreed on.
2. The NEPS Psychologist may be contacted for advice at this stage if necessary.
3. Parental consent is sought for the Assessment.
4. When consent is obtained a decision is made about the provision of the assessment.
5. Where the assessment is to be carried out with NEPS Psychologist, the Principal contacts NEPS to arrange for a school visit. Consent forms / referral forms are completed with parents in advance.
6. The NEPS Psychologist will meet with staff and/or parents, before observing the pupil

and carrying out the assessment, when appropriate. A report is issued to the school follow the visit(s).

7. Where the Assessment is to be carried out through SCPA, the Principal contacts an Educational Psychologist and a date for the assessment is arranged. Consent / Referral forms are completed by parents & school. The Assessment takes place in the school. After the Assessment, the Psychologist meets with the Parents. The Psychologist meets with the Class Teacher and Special Education Teacher. A report is sent to the parents and to the school.
8. The School Support/School Support Plus Process is initiated.

Recording & Storage of Assessments

Class Based Assessments / Tests: E.g. Class tests, portfolios, check lists etc.

- These tests are usually sent home with pupils at the end of the week / month / school year. A selection of samples may be provided to the incoming Teacher to inform their knowledge and understanding of the incoming class. Results of tests may be stored securely in the classroom filing cabinet by the Class Teacher for reference. These along with any incidental observation notes by the teacher are shredded at the end of the school year.

Diagnostic / Psychological Assessments

- Pre Sept 2023, results of any such testing are kept securely in the pupil's individual file in the central storage filing cabinet.
- Post Sept 2023, assessments and accompanying recommendations are scanned and attached to the child's file on Aladdin. These documents are password protected.

References:

- DES Circular 0013/2017
- DES Learning Support Guidelines 2000
- www.sess.ie
- Working Together to make a Difference for Children - NEPS

Implementation, Review and Communication

- This policy was adopted by the Board of Management in June 2023 The Board of Management will monitor the implementation of all aspects of this policy and amend as required. The policy will be reviewed in the light of experience and using the following success criteria:

Early identification and intervention is achieved

- Procedures are clear and role and responsibilities are defined.
- The transfer of information from Class teacher to Class Teacher happens efficiently at the end of the school year.

Ratification and Review:

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management in June 2023.

Signed _____

Date _____

Chairperson of Board of Management.

