

CENTRAL MODEL SENIOR SCHOOL

Assessment & Recording Policy (2019)

Introduction

This policy was originally drafted following a whole-school planning day (2008). The policy was updated in 2019 and ratified by the Board of Management on 6th February 2019.

Policy Rationale

The core of the policy is that all children should experience success at school. This policy endeavours to identify at the earliest possible opportunity, children who may have learning difficulties and put in place a whole school response to their needs. An effective assessment policy is central to this core objective.

Relationship to School Ethos

The school adopts a holistic approach to the education and development of each child and the enhancement of teaching processes. An effective Assessment policy identifies early interventions that need to be put in place to ensure that relative success, increased confidence and raised self esteem is achieved.

Aims and Objectives

The primary aims / objectives of the policy are to:

- facilitate improved pupil learning
- create a procedure for monitoring achievement
- track learning processes which assist the long and short term planning of teachers
- Teachers and parents need information on the progress of each child.
- We use this information to develop programmes for children and to screen children with special education needs. This information is also used in prioritizing the children who need an educational psychological assessment.

Principles

1. Careful thought is given to the purpose of assessment, adopting a wide range of methods to reflect the whole Curriculum and learning opportunities. The main purpose of assessment must be to facilitate progress in a pupil's learning.
2. Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process, a valuable formative tool.
3. The range of opportunities for carrying out continuous assessment is increased by good classroom organization, which encourages children to work independently while the teacher is concentrating on a small group.
4. The outcomes of assessment modify our teaching methods, provide feedback on the Curriculum as well as indicate pupil progress.
5. We recognize the potential for assessment in developing a positive self-image in the pupil from positive and constructive feedback and the feeling of success, which encourages further study.
6. In addition to normal assessment, opportunities are taken to record significant points in a child's development, such as:
 - a moment of 'breakthrough' in understanding
 - surprises and unusual reactions
 - interesting examples of strategies for mental calculation
 - difficulties encountered and possible reasons for them.
7. Results of assessment are reported in a way useful for pupils, teachers, parents and other interested parties.
8. Assessment of behaviour and performance gradually builds up into a profile for each pupil over his school career (Aladdin and DFL books).
9. Assessment records must be easy to interpret, useful, manageable and should not be administratively burdensome.

Policy Content

This policy is geared towards using assessment to inform planning and identify the needs of all pupils including the exceptionally gifted so that adequate strategies are in place early enough to facilitate remediation. These strategies may include pupil self assessment, pupil profiling, two way communication between parents and teachers, modification of teacher programmes, and Student Support Plans. See also SEN Policy.

Formal Assessment

The intake class is assessed in September of each year (informally). NNRIT and NVRT tests are conducted alternatively (1 per year). Further diagnostic tests are carried out throughout the year by the Learning Support Teacher on specific children as need arises. The Sigma Maths, Micra (5th,6th up until year 2021) and Drumcondra English Tests are administered in May of each year to all children

Informal Assessment

The most common form of informal assessment used in our school is teacher observation, teacher designed tests, projects, AFL and homework. These informal assessments are at the discretion of individual teachers. Records of teacher-designed tests are kept by the individual teachers and communicated to parents at the Parent-Teacher meeting / end of year report. Each teacher has discretion as to the format, administration and frequency of in-class testing. The most common types of informal teacher designed testing in our school are Maths tests, spelling tests and quizzes.

Class work and homework

Assessment for Learning (eg. peer assessment, self-assessment) is ongoing during all lessons in response to oral work, team work, skill development, project work etc. Homework and class work are marked and comments are made as appropriate. Marks and especially grades are not usually given. Work is ticked to indicate that the teacher has looked at it and a written comment to indicate sources of error, good points etc. will normally be made

Completion of Project work

The completed project or notes on a topic is collected and marked. The marking recognises excellence and indicates the areas that need improvement.

Primary to Secondary

A meeting is held each year with key staff from the local second-level schools to discuss pupils' performance in their assessment tests and to report on individual pupils. This meeting is attended by the sixth class teachers.

For pupils leaving the school, up to date records are passed on to the principal by the class teacher for forwarding to the new school (School Passports).

Standardised Testing

The school administers Micra T, Sigma T and the Drumcondra profiles. All classes are tested. The tests are usually administered towards the end of the last term by the class teacher. Standard and Percentile Rankings scores are recorded on the class Record template and stored on Aladdin. Following DES guidelines all standardized test scores will be orally given to parents/guardians at Parent/Teacher meetings and a STEN score will be written in the end of year reports.

Diagnostic Assessment.

Procedure for identification / screening / referral of Special Needs children from within the school.

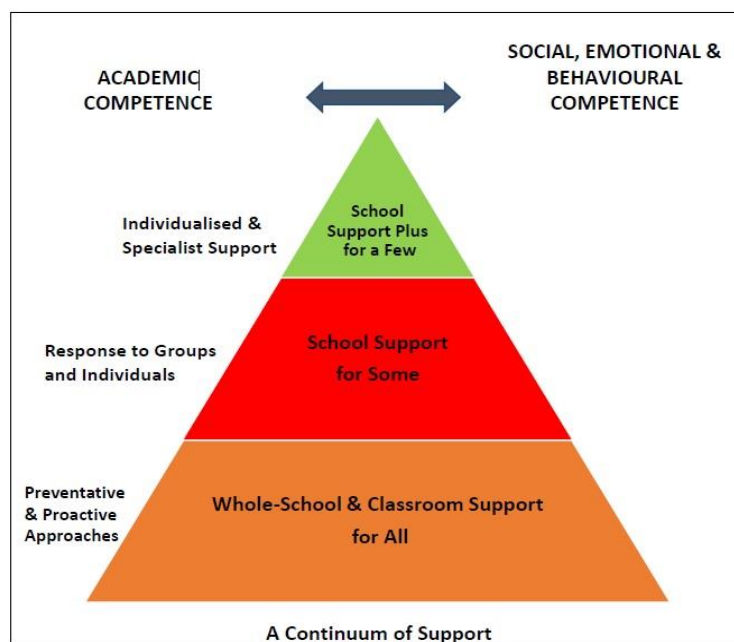
- Sigma-T and Micra-T or Drumcondra Tests are carried out annually.
- From this information, the class teachers and the SEN Team decide the appropriate level of intervention required and if educational assessment by a psychologist is necessary.
- Parent-Teacher meetings are held annually.
- Informal contact is maintained between parents and teachers particularly when it is found that a child may have special needs.
- School Support Plan meetings are held 2 or 3 times a year. Parents, the class teacher and SEN teacher and other professionals are invited to attend.

Identification of educational needs is central to our SEN policy and the new allocation model. By using the Continuum of Support framework, we can identify pupils' educational needs, to include academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties. This, in turn, allows us to identify and respond to needs in a flexible way.

The Continuum of Support suggests the following levels of support:

The flow diagrams outline how we gather information to identify needs and support children with additional needs. A more comprehensive explanation of each stage can be found in the Continuum of Support – Guidelines for teachers 12 - 35

https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/neps_special_needs_guidelines.pdf



Stage 1 Classroom Support

Classroom Support is the most common, and typically the first response to emerging needs. It is a response for pupils who have distinct or individual educational needs and who require approaches to learning and/or behaviour which are **additional to or different** from those required by other pupils in their class. Problem-solving at this level typically begins when a parent or teacher has concerns about an individual pupil. The teacher, SET and parents discuss the nature of the problem and consider strategies which may be effective. Classroom Support incorporates the simple, informal problem-solving approaches commonly used by class teachers to support emerging needs.

Classroom Support	<p>The class teacher considers how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of all pupils in the class.</p> <p>A classroom support plan is developed and/or adjusted over time for those pupils who do not respond appropriately to the differentiated programme.</p> <p>This is informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parental consultation• Teacher observation records• Teacher-designed measures/assessments• Basic needs checklist• Learning environment checklist• Pupil consultation - My Thoughts About School Checklist• Literacy and numeracy tests• Screening tests of language skills <p>A classroom support plan runs for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.</p>
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Stage 2 School Support

In some cases, interventions at classroom support level are not enough to fully meet the pupil's special educational needs. School Support may, therefore, be required. The class teacher needs to involve the Special Education Teacher Team (SET Team) in the problem-solving process at this point and it involves more systematic gathering of information and the development and monitoring of a School Support Plan.

School Support	<p>At this level a support plan is devised and informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teacher observation records• Teacher-designed measures/assessments• Parent and pupil interviews• Learning environment checklist• Diagnostic assessments in literacy/numeracy• Formal observation of behaviour including ABC charts, frequency measures• Functional assessment as appropriate, including screening measures for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties <p>A support plan at this level may detail suitable teaching approaches including team-teaching, small groups or individual tuition.</p> <p>A school support plan operates for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.</p>
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Stage 3 School Support Plus

If a pupil's special educational needs are **severe and/or persistent**, they are likely to need intensive support. School Support Plus will generally involve personnel outside the school team in the problem solving, assessment and intervention process. However, the information from Classroom and School Support work will provide the starting point for problem-solving at this level. Where a pupil has a diagnosis/report from an outside agency, recommendations in the report will be considered in deciding what supports are offered. However, within the school, we may not always be able to offer the supports recommended. Also, we may not always feel that the recommendations are borne out by the evidence we have regarding a pupil. We retain the right to offer what we feel is the most appropriate intervention for each pupil, taking into account evidence from teachers, parents and any other agencies that may be involved. Classroom support and school support will continue to be an important element of any intervention.

School Support Plus	<p>This level of the continuum is informed by a detailed, systematic approach to information gathering and assessment using a broad range of formal and informal assessment tools, reports from outside professionals (as appropriate) and may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher observation and teacher-designed measures • Parent and pupil interviews • Functional assessment • Results of standardised testing such as measures of cognitive ability, social, emotional and behavioural functioning, adaptive functioning etc <p>Data generated from this process is used to plan an appropriate intervention and can serve as a baseline against which to map progress.</p> <p>A support plan at this level is likely to be more detailed and individualised, and to include longer term planning and consultation.</p>
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Information Gathering and Assessment

Class & the SET team will use their observations, class tests, standardized and diagnostic tests, parental input and reports from professionals involved with the child to create a list that includes every child in the class. It will record children who are not on the support continuum as well as those at stages 1, 2, 3. (See template). This list should be updated at regular intervals and presented to the SET team so that they have it for their reviews. These reviews take place

1. In June and start of school year
2. Before Christmas
3. At commencement of the final term.

However, if a child presents with a more pressing concern, their needs may be addressed at any time.

A useful step in identifying pupils who may need learning support in English or Mathematics is for the class teacher (with the help of the SET) to administer one or more screening measures. The screening measures that are administered depend on the age and stage of development of the pupils concerned but the following will be administered annually:

- Reading and Maths tests (Drumcondra) will be used in 2nd, 3rd and 4th class. These will be carried out in May each year.
- Sigma-T and Micra-T will be used in 5th and 6th class to assess English and Maths. These will be carried out in May each year. However, by 2021 all classes will be using Drumcondra Reading and Maths tests.
- The NNRIT test will be carried out annually in 2nd class and biennially from 3rd class onwards. (End of January)
- The NVRT test will be carried out annually in 2nd class and biennially from 3rd class onwards. (End of January)

In mathematics we focus on language development and development of mathematical procedures and concepts. We continually review the assessment and screening tests that we use in order to balance the needs of our pupils and the need to provide information for appropriate support. Therefore we may deviate from the above list prior to the review date.

Sometimes children may be included for support based on a teacher's experience and insight or where there are exceptional circumstances such as difficult home circumstances, ongoing poor performance not flagged in standardised tests, difficulties with processing etc.

Psychological Assessment

The class teacher / HSCL/ Principal will contact the parents for permission to secure a Psychological Assessment for their child if stage 1 and 2 interventions have failed. An assessment will determine the subsequent level of intervention.

Recording

- Class test scores are usually stored on a class record sheet with class teacher. Information is passed on from teacher to teacher on a need to know basis.
- The standardised test results are stored on Aladdin.
- The Principal stores all psychological assessment reports.

Success Criteria

This policy is considered successful if –

- Early identification and intervention is achieved
- Clarity is achieved regarding procedures involved in staged approach
- Procedures are clear and roles and responsibilities are defined
- The Special Education team have clearly defined roles and objectives
- There is efficient transfer of information between teachers

Ratification & Communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on the 6th February 2019 and communicated to parents thereafter.

Review Timetable

This policy will be reviewed in 2022 and amended as necessary by means of a whole school collaborative process.

References

DES Circular 02/05 – 24/03

DES Learning Support Guidelines 2000

www.sess.ie

Working together to make a difference for children - NEPs