



**A:** Scoil Aodh Rua agus Nuala, Upper Main Street, Donegal Town, Co. Donegal, F94H792  
**E:** scoilaothrua@gmail.com  
**T:** +353 (0)749722661

# Assessment Policy

## Introduction:

This policy was formulated by the teaching staff of Scoil Aodh Rua agus Nuala to have a transparent and uniform approach to assessment throughout the school. This policy was drawn up in line with “*Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum: Guidelines for Schools*” (NCCA 2007).

## Rationale:

To ensure that all children in our school reach their full potential, we strive to identify learning difficulties at the earliest opportunity and to put in place an appropriate response to support the needs of children who may be encountering difficulties in school. An effective assessment policy is central to this process of teaching and learning. Through assessment, the teacher constructs a comprehensive picture of the short-term and long-term needs of the children in their care and plans accordingly. Assessment assists communication between all interested parties involved in a child's education i.e. teacher with a child, teacher with a parent and teacher with another teacher. Assessment helps the child to become more self-aware as a learner and develop powers of self-assessment. It is integral to all areas of the curriculum. It is central not only to the acquisition of a wide range of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values but also to the child's growth in self-esteem.

## Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School

The school adopts a holistic approach to the education and development of each child and the enhancement of the teaching processes. An effective Assessment Policy will identify the early interventions required to be put in place to ensure that enhancement, increased confidence and raised self-esteem are achieved.

## Aims:

- To benefit pupil learning
- To monitor learning processes
- To generate baseline data that can be used to monitor achievement over time
- To involve parents and pupils in identifying and managing learning strengths or difficulties
- To assist teachers in long and short-term planning
- To co-ordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis and to establish a firm link between assessment and decision making with regard to future strategies, content and methodologies in the classroom
- To describe strategies for assessment of pupils over as many areas of development as possible
- To emphasise the importance of early identification of pupils with specific numeracy and literacy problems through establishing relevant baseline data, that can be used to monitor achievement over time.
- To outline specific strategies for monitoring the progress of all pupils with particular learning needs
- To support practice on assessment for learning and assessment of learning

## Policy Content:

### Purpose of Assessment

- To inform planning for, and coverage of all areas of the curriculum
- To gather and interpret data at class / whole school level
- To identify the particular learning needs of pupils/groups including the exceptionally able if applicable
- To monitor pupil's progress and attainment
- To enable teachers to modify their programmes to ensure that the particular learning needs of individual pupils/groups are being addressed



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- To compile records of individual pupils' progress and attainment
- To facilitate the involvement of pupils in the assessment of their work where feasible
- To enable teachers to monitor their approaches and methodologies

## **Assessment of Learning/ Assessment for Learning**

### **Assessment of Learning**

The school recognises the four functions of assessment as being formative, summative, evaluative and informative.

### **Formative**

Helping the teacher to evaluate the learning opportunities provided.

We can plan activities taking into account the needs of the pupils so that their skill, knowledge and understanding are fully developed. Children will also be involved in assessing their own work.

### **Summative**

Providing information for school reports and records. We can write a report based on what the child knows, understands and can do.

### **Evaluative**

Helping the teacher to evaluate the learning opportunities provided. We can carefully plan activities on the needs of the children so that their skills, knowledge and understanding are developed. Children will also be involved in assessing their own work.

### **Informative**

This provides information for parents and for the child's next teacher. We can then communicate to parents and teachers how the child is performing.

The emphasis is on assessment for learning as well as assessment of learning – this means that evidence is used on an on-going basis to inform teaching and learning in addition to keeping records of pupil's progress and achievements.

A broad range of assessment approaches tools/strategies are used in Scoil Aodh Rua agus Nuala to cater for a wide spectrum of needs among the pupils. The children may be assessed with their class or individually out of the classroom whichever is the most appropriate for the pupil. Alternative assessment tools will be designed, altered, or sourced by the SEN Teachers should the Standardised Test be deemed inappropriate to the pupils level of ability.

The schools plan for each curriculum subject addresses the issue of assessment.

## **INFORMAL ASSESSMENT:**

Teachers aim to use a variety of both teacher led assessment and child led assessment.

The types of informal assessment methods used in the school are:

- **Teacher Observations:** Observing or talking to the child as he or she performs the activity or task. Also social interaction between pupils both inside and outside the classroom. Most observations are mentally recorded but on occasion notes are made and kept on file.
- **Teacher Designed Tasks and Tests:** are used for the core curriculum areas in all classes. These informal tests are at the discretion of the individual teachers. They maybe oral or written and would include problem solving. Records of teacher designed tests and tasks are kept by individual teachers and communicated to parents at parent/teacher meetings.





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- **Work Samples:** Portfolios including e-portfolios, scrapbooks, copybooks, projects and worksheets.
- **Mastery Records:** Assessment and grids for maths programmes. Checklists of sight vocabulary from class readers. Regular checks of initial sounds taught. Blending of CVC's in phonics.
- **Discussion/Conferencing:** Talking to the children about their work and setting targets for improvement. This involves self-assessment by the pupils, mostly 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Class.
- **Concept Mapping.** This may be used at the beginning of a unit of work (AFL) or at the end of a unit of work (AOL). It can be done in child's own copy or by teacher on whiteboard. It is particularly useful in SESE.
- **Questioning.** Questioning will underpin all classroom assessment methods. A variety of questions are used, closed questions, open questions- developing higher order thinking, probing questions and prompt questions.
- **Monitoring Spelling and Table Tests.** Weekly spelling test, table test, dictation etc.
- **Staged assessment** at the end of Strand Units of work especially in Mathematics.
- **Mental Maths Tests:** This is oral assessment.
- **Parental observation** homework comments and feedback at parent/teacher meetings.

#### Self/ Peer Assessment:

General: 2 Stars and a Wish, review grid e.g. www EBI, one minute feedback, Blooms Taxonomy, KWL, rubrics

#### Junior & Senior Infants

- Thumbs up, thumbs down - following instructions, the teacher would ask the children to give a "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" signal to determine their understanding. The class can be given the option of closing their eyes and giving the signal. This identifies children who will need additional help/differentiation to complete the task
- 3 Emojis 😊 😐 😞 on their desk with a coloured counter (the emojis will be coloured coded - green, orange/yellow, pale red; this will help with transfer of knowledge to a traffic light system which is used in some textbooks) - this will be used to assess their understanding of concepts throughout the lesson and task. These can also be used for wellbeing - to reflect on their feeling's day to day or how their week at school has been

#### First and Second Class

- Traffic Lights Emotion Fans  
Each child will have their own fan with emoji faces coloured green, orange and red. The children will show their level of understanding of new concepts and skills by choosing the relevant coloured face on their fan. This can be done either discreetly on their desk or by holding it in the air.
- Rubric  
Teacher designed self-assessment sheets in table form which allow the children to show their own level of understanding of new skills and concepts.

#### 3rd and 4th Classes

- Four agreed emojis will be used daily to assess children's understanding and enjoyment of themes, tasks and concepts as they progress through a lesson.
- A Learning Log with "battery" attached will be used at the end of a module to assess children's understanding of a concept, task or theme. The "battery" will be a tool to assess the children's own view of how much effort they believe they put in to their own learning.
- Compilation of individual booklets of learning logs so that the children and teacher can look back at perceived progress during the year.



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### **5th/6th Classes**

- A learning log with "battery" attached will be used weekly to assess children's understanding and enjoyment of tasks and concepts and to reflect on effort put into the work.. These logs will be more detailed than those used in the middle stream classrooms.
- A traffic Light system will be developed whereby children can communicate to their teacher on a weekly basis how they feel about their progress in a given subject area ( task, concept, theme)

### **Assessment Folders: (Class not individual Child)**

Teachers' Folders and Pupils' Folders.

Each teacher will keep an Assessment Folder for checklists, test results, (Teacher designed and standardised) sample of "best work or sample of work refined after consultation/correction. Samples of child's work which may show improvement and progression from term to term. Project work, samples in visual arts, photographs or video recordings of child/children participation in P.E. activities, or making presentations. DVD or recording of musical shows maybe included.

**The pupils' folders** will be samples of the childrens' work chosen by themselves. (SAF).

### **Screening Tests (Standardised Test):**

To assist in the early identification of learning strengths/difficulties, the school administers screening tests each year to all pupils from Senior Infants to Sixth Class. The Mist Test is administered to Senior Infants by the Learning Support Teacher. Tests are administered to all other classes by the class teacher. Results of these tests are interpreted by SET and class teachers. Screening may lead to specific intervention by the class teacher in the line with our Staged Approach to special needs provision. In addition the school places strong emphasis on early intervention. The screening tests used to identify strengths and weaknesses in the school are the following standardised tests

- Middle Infants Standard Tests (MIST Tests).
- New Micra T (1) Senior Infants
- Drumcondra Early Numeracy Senior Infants
- Sigma T Assessment (6<sup>th</sup>).
- Drumcondra Reading Test (1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Class).
- Drumcondra Spelling (1<sup>st</sup> -6<sup>th</sup> class).
- Drumcondra Irish (2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>)
- NNRIT (1<sup>st</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Classes)

Standardised Test are administered to all pupils from Senior Infants to 6<sup>th</sup> Class.

- The tests are scheduled for the end of May each year.
- Parents/guardians are informed in September on the exact date for testing and are requested to ensure their child/children are present.
- The SET Team are responsible for the purchase, distribution and co-ordination of testing.
- The class teachers are responsible for administering of the tests and corrections are completed in collaboration with the SET Team.
- All regulations outlined in the manuals are strictly adhered to.
- The Raw Score, Standard Score, Percentile Rank and Sten Score are recorded for each pupil.
- The Principal SETs and Class teachers are involved in the analysis of Standardised Test results for an individual pupil, class and whole school level.
- First priority for Learning Support is given to children who fall in the tenth percentile and below.
- All results are inputted to create the Bell Curve.
- The Sten Scores are recorded on the pupils Report Cards. The NCCA explanatory leaflet on same is attached.





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- The Sten Scores for English and Maths for 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils are presented to the Board of Management and also will be forwarded on line to the Department of Education annually.
- Information gathered from the analysis of results will be one of the tools used for target setting. Test results will also inform long term and short-term plans for teaching and learning.

**Diagnostic Assessment:** Formal diagnostic tests are used to determine the most appropriate learning support for individual pupils who are not progressing in a learning support situation. Diagnostics test are administered by the learning support teacher having first informed the parent. The learning support teacher will interpret and advise the class teacher of the results. A meeting will be arranged with parents to discuss the results and to recommend further assessment if necessary. The diagnostic tests used in our school are:

- Assessment File (Kick-Start).
- NNRIT (New Reading Intelligence Tests).
- Dolch Wordlist 220
- Quest
- Reading Recovery Assessment
- British Picture Vocabulary Test.
- Graded Word Test(Marino).
- Schonell Spelling Test.
- Diagnostic Profiles.
- DST.
- WRAT.
- Aston Index.
- Basic Number Diagnostic Test – Gillham
- Test 2r
- Maths Recovery Screening/ Mata Sa Rang
- Alpaca
- York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension (YARC)
- PM Benchmark
- EAL: The Primary School Assessment Kit
- Heggerty: Bridge the Gap

### **Psychological Assessment:**

If the staged approach fails to deliver adequate intervention the Principal/class teacher will contact the parent for permission to obtain a Psychological Assessment. The psychological Assessment will determine the subsequent level of intervention be it classroom support, school support or school support plus. Children with Psychological Assessment have a file re: same kept in the Principal's office. A list is compiled each year and relevant teachers informed to read assessments.

### **Storing of Test Results:**

All results of standardised tests are retained in the school filing cabinet and in the Principal's office and are available to parents on request.

Teachers will also receive a copy of their classes results from the previous year in September. This will be filed in cabinet/press (locked) in their classroom.

### **Recording and Storing of Records:**

- Each pupil has a file which is stored in a locked press/cabinet in each teacher's classroom.
- This file contains Standardised Test result, end of year reports and accounts of any particular needs that the child may have.
- This file is passed from teacher to teacher as the child progresses through the system.



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- The Mathematic Scripts for the previous year are kept until they are analysed (Error Analysis) and any difficulties identified and recorded – only for the children presenting with difficulties.
- Pupil Screening and Standardised Assessment results are kept until student reaches 21 years of age.
- At the beginning of each school year teachers will be given the opportunity during Croke Park Time to meet with the previous class teacher/learning support teacher or resource teacher who will brief him/her on the content of the curriculum covered the previous year and to identify any needs that particular pupils may have.

## **Reporting**

### **Reporting to Parents/Guardians:**

Assessment Results will be reported to Parents twice yearly. One of these will be Parent/Teacher Meeting usually held in November. The second will be a written Report (Report Card) and follow up meeting at the end of the school year. Outside of formal meetings Parents are welcome to meet teachers during the year. It is advised to make a prior appointment so as to maximise the benefit of such meeting for pupils, parents and teachers.

### **Report Card:**

The school has customised their own Report Card based on the NCCA Template Report Card.

### **Reporting to outside Agencies:**

In the event of a request by an outside agency for a pupil's assessment the Principal will be informed and will be supplied with the report before it is forwarded. A copy of the report will be kept in the Pupils file in the Principal's filing cabinet. A copy of the request will also be kept on file and the reason why the report was sought. The Principal will have the discretion to bring any sensitive reports or requests to the Board of Management for their attention, advice or direction.

### **Reporting to other Schools:**

A Student Transfer Form, Pupil's Report Card to include Standardised Test results will be forwarded to the Principals of Primary/Post Primary School when confirmation of enrolment has been received.

### **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.

### **Responsibilities and Roles:**

Mainstream, Special Education Teachers and the Principal assume shared responsibility. It is the responsibility of the class teacher to set in train staged interventions at class level (Differentiation).

At stage 2 the responsibilities are shared with the Special Education Team (Screening Tests, Diagnostic Tests). The Principal assumes a primary role at Stage 3 when a Psychological Assessment may be required. Parents /Guardians have a role at all stages and the lines of communication are always kept open.





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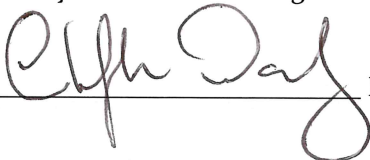
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### **Implementation:**

This policy supersedes the policy drawn up previously and is effective from February 2024

### **Ratification and Communication:**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management and communicated to parents thereafter.

Chairperson:  Date: 7/2/24

### **Review Timetable:**

This policy will be reviewed in two years or as circumstances may warrant.

### **References:**

DES Circular 02/05  
24/03

DES Learning Support Guidelines 2000

[www.sess.ie](http://www.sess.ie)

Working together to make a Difference for children –NEPS

Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum Guidelines for Schools – NCCA.



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## **Appendix One**

### **Information for parents**

#### **Your child and standardised testing**

##### **Understanding the STEN score:**

During your child's time in primary school he/she will complete standardised tests in English reading and in maths. Children in Irish medium schools will also complete standardised tests in Irish reading. Schools must use the tests in 2nd, 4th and 6th classes and share the results with you. This leaflet explains what standardised tests are and how they can help your child's learning.

##### **What is a standardised test?**

We are all familiar with the idea of tests in school. Your child probably tells you how he/she did in a spelling or tables test prepared by the teacher. A standardised test is another kind of test. The standardised tests in English reading and maths measure a child's achievement compared to other children in all schools at the same class level or age level. The standardised test in Irish reading measures a child's achievement compared to other children in Irish medium schools at the same class level or age level. The English reading and Irish reading tests give information about how well your child can understand what he/she has read. The tests do not gather information on your child's written or spoken English and Irish. The maths test finds out how well your child can use numbers for different purposes and solve maths problems.

Schools can choose from a number of standardised tests which have been developed for use in primary schools in Ireland. These tests are based on the curriculum. There are different levels of the tests so, for example, the test your child does in first/second class will relate to your child's age and the curriculum for that class level.

##### **Will all children complete all the standardised tests?**

No. Children in English medium schools will complete standardised tests in English reading and maths. Children in Irish medium schools will complete standardised tests in English reading, maths and Irish reading.

##### **Are standardised tests the same as intelligence tests?**

No. Standardised tests are not intelligence tests. The main purposes of using standardised tests are to help the teacher plan your child's learning, and to inform you about how well your child is doing in English reading, maths and Irish reading. When the test scores are used alongside other information gathered by the teacher through observing your child at work, talking with him/her and looking at his/her work, they show how your child is getting on in English reading, maths, and Irish reading, and help the teacher to identify your child's strengths and needs.





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### **What are standardised tests used for?**

Standardised tests are used to

- report to you as a parent on your child's achievement in reading, spelling, maths and Irish.
- help to find out if your child has learning difficulties in reading, spelling, maths and Irish so that the school can put appropriate supports in place.
- help to find out if your child is a high achiever in reading, spelling, maths and Irish so that appropriate learning experiences can be provided for him/her.
- help your child's teacher plan for further learning across the curriculum because your child's achievement in reading, spelling, maths and Irish are important for all his/her learning.

### **When are standardised tests carried out?**

Schools are required to use standardised tests at three identified stages during your child's time at primary school:

- English-medium schools are required to implement standardised testing in English reading and maths during the period May/June for all children in 2nd, 4th and 6th classes with effect from 2012 onwards.
- Irish-medium schools are required to implement standardised testing in Irish reading, English reading and Mathematics during the period May/June for all children in 2nd, 4<sup>th</sup> and 6th classes with effect from 2012 onwards.

### **Do all children take standardised tests?**

A small number of children might not take the tests. For example, if your child's first language is not English, the teacher may decide that he/she should not take the English reading test. Your child may, however, take the maths test. If your child has a learning or physical disability, the teacher may decide not to give the test but to use a different way to check on your child's progress. In all cases, the teacher will use the information he/she has about your child to decide whether or not your child should take the English reading test, the maths test and Irish reading test.

### **Should I help my child prepare for standardised tests?**

No. Standardised tests are one source of information about your child's achievement in reading, spelling, maths and Irish reading. The teacher gathers information about your child's learning all the time. Your child will take the standardised tests on a regular school day as part of his/her daily work in the classroom. Indeed, your child may not even realise he/she has taken the tests!

### **How will I know how my child has done on the standardised tests?**

Your child's class teacher will share the test results with you, typically at a parent/teacher meeting or in a school report. You will see the results of the tests on your child's school report at the end of 2nd, 4th and 6th classes.



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### **How will I know what the test scores mean?**

You will be familiar with hearing your child say he/she got 62% in a maths test or 9 out of 15 in a spelling test. Standardised tests generally use other types of scores. Your child's teacher may tell you how your child did in the test using a STen (standard ten) score.

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### **Understanding STEN scores**

STEN scores go from 1 to 10. The table below describes what the different STEN scores tell you about your child's achievement in English reading, maths and Irish reading.

STEN score	What the score means	Proportion of children who get this score
8-10	Well above average	1/6
7	High average	1/6
5-6	Average	1/3
4	low average	1/6
1-3	Well below average	1/6

If your child's STEN score is 5 or 6, you will know that his/her performance on the test is average. About one third of children in Ireland have STEN scores in this band. You can see from the table that there are also STEN scores above and below the average.

As with other tests your child does in school, his/her result on a standardised test can be affected by how he/she feels on the test day or by worry or excitement about a home or school event. This means that each test result is an indication of your child's achievement in English reading, maths and Irish reading. You play an important role in encouraging and supporting your child no matter what he/she scores on the test