

# Holy Angels National School

Clogher,  
Claremorris,  
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F12RC95



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## Policy on Assessment

### Introduction:

This policy, revised and redrafted by staff in November 2021 during the 2021/22 school year, to reflect best practice and recommendations contained in the publication 'Assessment in the Primary School, Guidelines for Schools' (NCCA 2007) and legislative requirements of the National Strategy to improve Literacy and Numeracy in young people 2011-2020 (circular 0056/2011 DES).

### Policy Rationale:

This policy reflects the integral role of assessment in teaching and learning. Through assessment the teacher constructs a comprehensive picture over time of a child's progress and /or achievement in learning across the Primary School Curriculum.

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:

At Holy Angels National School, we adopt 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.

### Definition

Assessment is the process of gathering, recording, interpreting, using and reporting information about a child's progress and achievement in developing knowledge, skills and attitudes.

### Aims and Objectives:

The primary aims/objectives of the policy are;

1. To facilitate improved pupil learning
2. To monitor learning processes
3. To track learning processes which assist the long and short term planning of teachers
4. To co-ordinate assessment procedures on a school basis involving parents and pupils in managing strengths and weaknesses

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## Policy Content

### Approaches to Assessment

The curriculum describes assessment as having four functions – formative, summative, evaluative and diagnostic. Building on these functions, we focus on two principal approaches to assessment, Assessment for Learning (AfL) and Assessment of Learning (AoL).

### Assessment for Learning (AfL)

AfL helps teachers and children to focus on three key questions:

- **Where** are children **now** in their learning?
- **Where** are children **going** in their learning?
- **How** will children get to the next point in their learning?

### Assessment of Learning (AoL)

AoL generally involves assessing a child's learning at the end of a given period, such as the end of a unit of work, a week, a term, or a year. AoL helps the teacher to plan future work, to set new targets, and to provide feedback and information for end-of year assessment.

### Classroom Assessment Methods

It is the policy of this school to assess pupils' progress in curricular areas on a continuous basis. This continuous assessment will form the basis of Parent/Teacher consultations which are held each year, usually in October/November.

Methods of Continuous Assessment used include the following:

#### Self-Assessment

Children are involved in self-assessment when they look at their own work in a reflective way and identify aspects of it that are good and that could be improved.

#### Conferencing

Conferencing in the context of assessment means that those concerned with the child's learning share their knowledge and understanding of the child's work, its processes and outcomes during a planned or intuitive meeting. Types of conferencing include Teacher/child, Parent/teacher and Teacher/teacher.

#### Portfolio Assessment

A portfolio is a collection of the child's work, reflecting his/her learning and development throughout each school year. It can provide evidence of progress in learning in a curriculum area, a subject, a strand or across a number of these.

The teacher or child periodically selects a piece of work for the portfolio e.g. an example of written work, SESE project work, pieces of / photos of artwork etc. Each child's portfolio is kept in their classroom.

#### Concept Mapping

Concept mapping is a process used to make spatial representations of ideas and the relationships between these ideas. The purpose of the maps is to help the child show what

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and how he/she thinks about an idea, and helps the child to organize and represent his /her thinking. Concept mapping can be used for AfL and AoL.

## Questioning

Questioning underpins all classroom assessment methods. Teachers regularly ask children questions about their work to find out what they have done and why. Teachers use these questions to assess knowledge and understanding (AoL) and to guide children in their learning (AfL). Children use questions to help them to learn, for example when they ask their teacher and peers questions.

## Teacher Observation

Teacher observation, spontaneous or planned, can happen any time a teacher and child interact. Observations made by the teacher in the classroom provide some of the most immediate and accurate information about a child's learning. He/she can identify the child's learning needs and preferences and can gauge how effectively those needs are being met in class.

## Teacher-Designed Tasks and Tests

Tasks and tests can take the form of written or oral assessments or practical assignments developed by the teacher to assess children's learning. They can be used throughout the school year as a basis for continuous assessment (AfL) and can also be used at the end of an academic year or at the end of a period of learning about a certain topic for the purpose of AoL. They can serve both AoL and AfL at the same time.

Tasks or tests provide opportunities for children to demonstrate their levels of understanding and their skills, and offer valuable information that can be used to plan future work directed towards the children's needs.

## Standardised Testing

Standardised tests are used to measure a child's reading and mathematical skills, and to determine children's progress in those areas. Information from the tests is important given the vital role of literacy and numeracy in enabling children to access the full curriculum.

The National strategy requires Standardised Tests to be administered each year to 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes, during May/June. It is our school policy to administer the tests to 1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> classes inclusive. At present these are the Micra-T and Sigma-T Tests.

Students may be excluded from standardised testing if, in the view of the school principal they have a learning or physical disability which would prevent them from attempting the tests.

## Diagnostic Assessment:

Diagnostic tests are administered by the Special Education Teacher following referral by the class teachers. The administration of such tests is in keeping with the approach recommended by **Circular 02/05** where a staged approach is used by the individual class teachers before recourse to diagnostic testing /psychological assessment. (see SET Policy)

The diagnostic tests used in the school include;

- MALT math's assessment

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- Jackson Phonics
- Marino Reading Test
- York Assessment
- NRIIT (Non Reading Intelligence Test)
- Spar Spelling Test

## Screening:

The screening tests used to identify learning strengths and weaknesses in the school include:

- (BIAP) Belfield Infant Assessment Test
- Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST)
- Sigma - T
- Micra - T
- NNRIT (New Non Reading Intelligence Test)

These tests are administered individually or on a class basis.

The MIST screening test is given to Senior Infant children each year during the 2<sup>nd</sup> / 3<sup>rd</sup> term, and the follow-on programme is administered where required.

## Psychological Assessment:

If a staged approach in the classroom fails to deliver adequate intervention, the class teacher/Principal will contact the parents for permission to secure a psychological assessment for their child (see SET Policy).

## Recording:

Each pupil has a file which is securely stored in each classroom. This file records standardised test results and end of year reports. This file is passed from teacher to teacher as the child progresses from junior room to senior room.

## Reporting:

- A Parent Teacher meeting is held every year, usually during the first term, where each child's progress is discussed in detail.
- As per DES guidelines, the sTen scores of the standardised tests administered by the school will be included, in a separate section, on the end of year report card. These reports will be issued in sufficient time before the closure of the school for the summer vacation to allow parents a reasonable opportunity to seek meetings with the teachers to discuss the written report if necessary.

## Success Criteria:

This policy is considered successful if;

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

## **Implementation:**

This policy supersedes the previous Assessment Policy.

## **Ratification & Communication:**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 25th January 2022.

## **Review Timetable:**

This policy will be reviewed informally after one year and formally within six years.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson, BOM

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal, Secretary BOM

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_