



ASSESSMENT POLICY

Overview:

While it is generally accepted that assessment has always been an integral part of primary school life in Ireland, it has been given statutory obligation in Section 22 (2) (b) of the Education Act 1998 which requires schools to “regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to the students and their parents.” Thus, in formulating this policy, Gaelscoil Faithleann understands assessment to be “...the process of gathering, recording, interpreting, using and reporting information about a child’s progress and achievement in developing knowledge, skills and attitudes”. (Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum – Guidelines for Schools NCCA).

Development:

We aim, through this policy, to continue to develop and extend the good practice in assessment already established in the school. It was developed by the S.E.N team. This policy should provide better clarity about what is expected at each class level and each person’s responsibility for the different aspects of assessment across our school.

Policy Rationale:

The core of the policy is that all children should experience success at school. This policy endeavors 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. It is extremely important that assessment at Gaelscoil Faithleann should motivate pupils and enable and encourage them to achieve to the best of their ability.

Relationship to School Ethos:

We aim to provide a well-ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupils are identified and addressed. The school adopts a holistic approach to the education and development of each child and to the enhancement of teaching and learning processes. We believe that an effective Assessment Policy will help teachers to identify early interventions that need to be





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put in place to ensure that enhancement, 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.
- generate base-line data that can be used to monitor achievement over time.
- identify areas of concern
- track learning processes which assist the long- and short-term planning of teachers.
- co-ordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis involving parents and pupils in managing strengths and weaknesses.
- plan the assessment of learning outcomes that informs future teaching.
- diagnose difficulties in learning to provide intervention strategies.
- encourage increasing skills of self-assessment.
- keep records of attainment that will inform the reporting process.

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 is to facilitate progress in a pupil's learning.
2. Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process, a valuable formative tool.





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3. The range of opportunities for carrying out continuous assessment is increased by good classroom organisation, 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 recognise 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. Results of assessment are reported in a way useful for pupils, teachers, parents and other interested parties.
7. Assessment records must be easy to interpret, useful, manageable and should not be administratively burdensome.

Policy Content:

This policy is aimed towards using assessment to inform planning and identify the needs of all pupils 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 programs, and use of Classroom Support Plans, School Support Plans and School Support Plus Plans.

Assessment Methods:

How is learning assessed?





As part of the assessment process, a selection of assessment tools, chosen at the discretion of the teacher, will be used to help gain a clearer picture of the success of the teaching and learning in our school. Apart from the specific tests named below, a variety of assessment methods are used throughout the school, depending on the age of the pupils and the specific curricular area. In general, the assessment methods used in this school are:

- **Teacher observation**
- **Teacher-designed tasks and tests**
- **Pupil self-assessment**
- **Completed assignments by pupils** – projects, copybooks, activities, work samples, homework
- **Parental, pupil feedback or observation**
- **Record keeping**
- **Annual reports**
- **Checklists**

Assessment Folder

Class teachers record much of their assessment in Assessment Folders. These folders may include the following:

- Class Test results
- Support & Differentiation Information
- Assessment Led Planning Information
- Individual Pupil Profiles containing examples of work and/or completed assessments
- Any other information deemed suitable by the class teacher.

Main Areas to be Addressed in this Policy:

1. **Assessment for Learning**
2. **Assessment of Learning**
3. **Self-assessment by students and teachers**
4. **Early Intervention, Supplementary Teaching, Continuum of Support**
5. **Staff Roles and Responsibilities**





6. **Screening/Diagnostic Assessment**
7. **Standardised Assessment**
8. **Educational Psychological Assessment**
9. **HSE Primary Care Assessments**

Assessment for Learning (AfL):

Assessment for Learning emphasises the child's active role in his/her own learning. This level of involvement, in shaping their own learning, can heighten children's awareness of themselves as learners and encourage them to take more personal responsibility for, and pride in, their learning. By interacting with the children in such a way, the teacher can gain invaluable information as to how best to deliver the curriculum in their classroom. Every interaction has the potential to provide the teacher and children with a better idea of what they do or don't understand or can and can't do. Many of these interactions are informal and are a continuous part of everyday classroom activities, in all classes, across the full curriculum. They are used to identify what pupils have achieved, what might be affecting their progress and what strategies will best support their future learning. The information that such assessment provides will also enable teachers to evaluate their own practice and make changes.

Assessment for Learning may consist of, among others, the following:

- a) Teachers observing the child in the classroom and whole school environment, through listening, observations, reflections, and reactions to classroom problems, so that a picture of the child can be built up. Various checklists can be compiled e.g. vocabulary, behaviour, skills, samples of pupils' work (e.g. writing, art) etc. An important part of





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recording the progress of the child is the periodic recording of strengths and weaknesses of the child.

- b) Class work
- c) Homework
- d) Pupil – teacher discussion
- e) Project work
- f) Teacher designed assessments
- g) Microsoft Teams – Reading Progress and Assignments
- h) Assessments on Digital Prog. i.e. Nessy TTRS Splash Learn

Assessment of Learning (AoL)

Assessment of Learning 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. Assessment of Learning is more about measuring a child's cumulative progress towards objectives, often in the form of a grade or score. Assessment of Learning also helps the teacher to plan future work, to set new targets, and to provide feedback and information for end-of-year assessment.

Techniques for Assessment include:

- Focused Observations – observing a child or a group of children at an activity.
- Random Observations – monitoring what is happening i.e. works better in a group, alone, tires easily, responds to visual promptings etc.





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- Structured Observations – observing one particular child each day at set intervals.
- Discussion, conferencing – talking to and questioning the children about their work, setting targets for future work.
- Presentations – evaluating with the child the outcome or end product – writing, drawing, diagram, model charts etc.
- Teacher designed tests
- Portfolios of work.
- Staged assessments at the end of blocks of work, particularly in Mathematics.
- Mental Maths tests
- Behaviour and attendance monitored where necessary.

*The most common form of assessment used in our school is teacher observation, teacher designed tests, projects and homework (informal assessment). 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 and the school report issued at the end of the school year. 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 math's tests, spelling tests and quizzes.

Self-Assessment by Students and Teachers

Children are involved in self-assessment when they look at their own work in a reflective way, identify aspects of it that are good and that could be improved, and then set personal learning targets for themselves. Self-assessment skills include effective questioning, reflection, problem solving, comparative analysis, and the ability to share thoughts in a variety of ways. Self-assessment can be used by children of all ability levels and in all areas of learning. In age-appropriate ways, it can be used throughout the primary school and across all subjects.





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Whole class discussions, group situations or one-to-one conferencing are all platforms for self-assessment. These everyday activities place assessments at the very heart of teaching and learning. It enables the child to take greater responsibility for his/her own learning. A learning log and/or reflective report cards can be used to document the child's self-assessment and reflection on his/her work samples or collections.

Teachers in turn, can also use self-assessment to evaluate how they deliver the curriculum content to the children and by reflecting on how a unit of work was delivered. This reflective practice, coupled with the AfL and AoL mentioned earlier, will help to inform them as to what was successful and if any adjustments may improve the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom.

We will use a variety of ways of involving pupils in assessing their own learning, these may include:

1. Questioning
2. Feedback-individual and/or group feedback
3. Dialogue and Discussion
4. Focused Correction of Work
5. Visual Aids in infant classes
6. Traffic Light System
7. KWL grid – This can be used orally and/or written, by group and/or class and/or individual





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8. Two Stars and a Wish
9. Reflective report cards

Early Intervention, Supplementary Teaching, Continuum of Support

There is an emphasis in our school on early intervention from the Infant classes upwards. The Department has set out the Continuum of Support framework to assist schools in identifying and responding to students' needs. This framework recognises that special educational needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, and from transient to long term, and that students require different levels of support depending on their identified educational needs. Using this framework helps to ensure that interventions are incremental, moving from class-based interventions to more intensive and individualised support, and that they are informed by careful monitoring of progress.

Using the Continuum of Support framework, Gaelscoil Faithleann can identify students' educational needs, to include academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties. The framework emphasises the importance of looking at a student's needs in context.

The Continuum of Support enables Gaelscoil Faithleann to identify and respond to needs in a flexible way. This means that needs can be responded to as early as possible. Of course, the principle that pupils with the greatest level of need have access to the greatest levels of support is of primary importance. This approach is also supported by information and engagement with external professionals, as required.





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In the case where a child is selected for supplementary teaching but the parents do not wish for the child to receive such support, a written letter from the parents will be sought outlining that while the school made them aware of the difficulty their child was experiencing and while supplementary teaching was made available, they have decided that they do not wish the child to avail of this support. Alternatively, the parents are called and the topic discussed. The phone conversation is documented and added to the pupil's support file. Permission slips from all parents are kept on record including those who do not wish for their child to receive support.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for ensuring that continuous monitoring, assessment and evaluation as outlined in the Primary School Curriculum and/or School Curricular Plan for each curriculum area are undertaken. Teachers are encouraged to use informal and formal assessment and to use a range of assessment tools, as appropriate to the subject area and/or topic being assessed (as documented above).

The class teacher is responsible for ensuring lesson content and resources are adequately differentiated to allow their pupils access the curriculum and progress learning.

Following in-class assessment, it is the class teacher's responsibility to put in place a Stage 1 Classroom Support Plan and/or a Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties plan for any pupil they have a concern about, whether the concern is that they are under or overachieving relative to their peers.





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The class teacher is responsible for telling the SENCO and SET (if different) that they have a Classroom Support Plan in place for the individual pupil. The SENCO and SET (if different) then places the pupil on a list for possible intervention.

Class teachers are responsible for the recording, evaluation and monitoring of teacher-based assessments for each pupil in their class. Each class teacher is required to keep an assessment folder with their records of individual pupil progress.

The Principal and SENCO Team

The Principal has overall responsibility for ensuring that all tasks and duties in this policy are delivered and completed in an effective way.

It is the responsibility of the class teacher to set in motion staged interventions at class level. At Stage 2, the responsibilities are shared with the Special Education Team. The Principal and the SENCO team are involved at all stages of the continuum of support and assume a primary role at Stage 3 when further assessment involving outside agencies may be required.

Parents have a role at all stages and the lines of communication must be always kept open.

Screening

BIAP	Naónain Bheaga
MIST	Naónáin Mhóra
Fónaic	Naónáin Bheaga & Mhóra
Jolly Phonics	Naónáin Mhóra
Gafa le Mata	Gach Téarma N.B – Rang 6





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Drumcondra Early Literacy Screening	Rang 1
Drumcondra Early Numeracy Screening	Rang 1
NRIT	Rang 2 & Rang 5
Drumcondra Reading	Rang 2 – Rang 6
Drumcondra Maths	Rang 2 – Rang 6
Drumcondra Gaeilge	Rang 2 – Rang 6
Drumcondra Spelling	Rang 2 – Rang 6
S.E.T	A range of phonological, Reading, Spelling & Maths diagnostic Tests when required.

Standardised Testing

- Class teachers administer standardised tests to their own classes during the given period (indicated above), adhering strictly to the conditions outlined in the testing manuals.
- Exemption from standardised testing is considered when deemed necessary following Department of Education guidelines.
- Raw Score, Standard Score, Percentile Rank, STEN and Reading Age are recorded electronically.
- SENCOs, Special Education Team and class teachers, in consultation with the Principal analyse the results of all standardised test in June for allocation of resources to pupils in September.





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- Priority for SEN support is given to children with a below 20th percentile. Support is also offered to Junior and Senior Infants under the Early Intervention Programme.
- Information gathered from the analysis of results informs long term and short-term plans, Classroom Support, School Support and School Support Plus plans.
- In line with Circular 0018/2012, standardised test results are reported to the BOM. Results for 2nd, 4th and 6th Class are reported to the Department of Education and Skills in aggregated form. STENs are communicated to parents with an explanation guide.

Diagnostic Testing

Diagnostic tests are used to determine the appropriate learning support for individual pupils who present with learning difficulties. They are administered by the SET team following referral by the class teacher in consultation with the SENCO, Principal and parents/guardians. 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. If the diagnostic assessment indicates that supplementary teaching would be beneficial this will be arranged. In consultation with the classroom teacher, a learning programme will be drawn up and the child will be on Stage 2 of the Continuum of Support.

Parents are provided with test results, advice intervention is sought from NEPS when necessary and if a psychological assessment is warranted, parental permission is sought and a consent form is completed. The Principal and SENCO will facilitate such an assessment happening.

The results of the diagnostic assessment are recorded in the Support Plan for each pupil. The profile will also include:

- Previous test results
- Relevant information from class teachers, parents and other professionals
- Identification of the pupil's particular needs.





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Psychological Assessment:

When a child is prioritised for an educational psychologist assessment with NEPS (National Educational Psychological Society), a phone call or meeting will be held with the parents to discuss this procedure. The SENCO and/or SET, in conjunction with the Principal will organise the assessment. The assessment will inform the priority targets of a School Support or School Support Plus Plan for the child. The psychological reports can only be accessed by personnel as outlined in page 95 of the NCCA Guidelines. These reports are stored securely in a locked filing cabinet.

Recording and Storage of Assessment Information

How is assessment information recorded?

Assessment information in this school is recorded through marks, grades, checklists and narrative comment, both oral and written. Comments are phrased in a positive manner and, if appropriate, with recommendations for improvement in specific areas of learning.

Where is assessment information stored?

The records of report cards and standardised assessments are in attic storage. Each student has their own file. The results of standardised tests and NNRIT are also stored in electronic copy form on Aladdin. Sensitive data relating to individual students such as reports from outside agencies are not held on Aladdin but stored in each student's file in secure filing cabinets. All assessment information is stored in line with the Data Protection Policy.

With whom is information shared?





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The Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003 entitles the parents/guardians of all primary school children to have access to all personal data relating to their children, whether stored in electronic form or hard copy. This school complies with this legislation.

Where appropriate, the school also shares information with other teachers, other primary schools and secondary schools when children transfer, and the children themselves. Assessment information on an individual child will be provided to another school, primary or post-primary, to which the child is transferring. This will only be done upon receipt of written enrolment confirmation. If a school requests our school to forward the educational psychological assessment, this request will be conveyed to the parent.

The school also shares information with other relevant individuals and agencies, with parental permission, such as the Inspectorate of the Dept. of Education and Skills, Special Education Needs Organisers (SENOs), Educational Welfare Officers (EWOs) of Tusla and other professionals such as speech and language and occupational therapists. Where assessment information is shared, confidentiality is maintained between the school and the receiver of the information. All requests from outside agencies for assessment information on individual pupils must be made through the Principal.

How is assessment information shared with parents/guardians?

- Assessment information is formally shared with parents twice a year.
- Parent/teacher meetings take place once a year during the first term, usually in November. Each child's parents are invited to attend a meeting. If either the teacher or the parents believe that a follow-up meeting should take place, it will be arranged for a mutually convenient time.





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- Junior Infants meetings take place in January.
- A comprehensive written report is given to parents at the end of the school year. This report covers both academic and social progress. This report includes the results of Standardised Tests (1st -6th) and a short explanation of the results.
- Results of the BIAP and MIST are shared with the parents of children whose results have given cause for concern.
- Results of other diagnostic tests are shared with the parents and teacher of the child concerned.
- Copies of the end of year reports are available on to the child's new teacher at the beginning of the following school year via the Aladdin System.

How are assessment results used?

Assessment results are used to communicate a child's progress to his/her parents (Assessment of Learning).

Results are also used to enable teachers to plan lessons in a specific way, both for the class in general and to differentiate the learning experience for particular pupils (Assessment for Learning).

Success Criteria

This policy is considered successful if:

- Early identification and intervention are 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





We will know this policy has succeeded when:

1. Early identification and intervention are achieved
2. A range of informal and formal assessment modes are used to place assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning.
3. Procedures run smoothly and efficiently because there is clarity about what is expected and who is responsible for the different aspects.
4. Transfer of information from teacher to teacher happens efficiently at the beginning and end of the school year.
5. Each child has been presented with the opportunity of assessment from the spectrum of assessment tools mentioned above.

Roles and Responsibilities:

SENCOs, SET Team and the Principal assume shared responsibility.

It is the responsibility of the class teacher to set in train staged interventions at class level. At Stage 2, the responsibilities are shared with the SENCO and SET Team. The SENCO and Principal assume a primary role at Stage 3 when a Psychological Assessment may be required. Parents have a role at all stages and the lines of communication must be always kept open.

Implementation Date

While most of the elements of this policy have been in operation within the school for many years, this amended Assessment Policy will formally apply September 2024.





Gaelscoil Faithleann

Uimhir Rolla 19941 I



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Timetable for Review

This Policy will be reviewed regularly in line with developments from DES or as required.

Ratification

This policy is hereby ratified by the Board of Management of Gaelscoil Faithleann.

Signed:

Date: 21ú Deireadh Fómhair 2024

(Chairperson BOM)



"Ní neart go cur le chéile"

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