**Assessment Policy of Dunhill N.S.**

**Policy Rationale:**

The core of the policy is that all children should experience success at school. This policy endeavours to recognise how a pupil is progressing and to establish their levels of understanding, knowledge, performance, strengths and difficulties with a view to reaching their full potential. It also helps to identify at the earliest possible opportunity, children who may have learning difficulties and put in place a school response to their needs. An effective assessment policy is central to these objectives.

**Relationship to School Ethos:**

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 identifies early interventions that need to be put in place to ensure that enhancement, increased confidence and raised self esteem is achieved.

**Aims and Objectives:**

The primary aims/objectives of the policy are;

1. To facilitate improved pupil learning
2. To create a procedure for monitoring achievement
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

**Policy Content:**

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

**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.
3. The outcomes of assessment modify our teaching methods, provide feedback on the Curriculum as well as indicate pupil progress.
4. 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.
5. In addition to normal assessment, opportunities are taken to record significant points in a child's educational development.
6. Results of assessments are recorded & 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.

**Assessing Pupils:**

The most common forms of assessment used in our school are teacher observation, pupil self -assessment, teacher designed tests, projects, oral work, formal and informal conferencing, group work 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 Maths tests, English Tests, Irish Tests, spelling tests and quizzes.

**Standardised Testing:**

The school uses the Micra-T, Sigma-T and Drumcondra Spelling Tests from First class upwards. Senior infants are tested using the MIST test (administered in February), Drumcondra Early Numeracy Test and the Drumcondra Early Literacy Test. The tests are usually administered in the last week of May or first week of June by the class teacher. Standard, Sten Scores and percentile ranking scores are recorded on the class record template and stored by each individual teacher, stored digitally and a copy is held in the administration office. The SET analyse the results in June for allocation of resources to pupils in September. Assessment will help formulate SSE planning. Standardised Assessment results from relevant tests are forwarded to the Dept of Ed as required.

**Diagnostic Assessment:**

The school’s Special Educational Needs Policy lists all diagnostic tests used by the school. Such tests are administered by the SETs following referral by the class teachers in consultation with parents/guardians. The administration of such tests is in keeping with the staged approach which is used by the individual class teachers before recourse to diagnostic testing /psychological assessment. Stage 1 involves a classroom support (class teacher responsible – a short simple plan for extra help to be implemented within the classroom setting). Stage 2: If intervention is deemed necessary then the pupil should be referred to the SEN Teacher with the parent’s permission for further diagnostic testing. Stage 3: where children have significant learning needs that require more intensive intervention. Parents are provided with test results and if a psychological assessment is warranted, parental permission is sought and a consent form is completed. The Principal will facilitate such an assessment happening.

The diagnostic tests used in the school include;

* Analysis of Standardised Tests
* Jackson Phonics Test
* NRIT – Non Reading Intelligence Test

**Screening:**

The screening tests used to identify learning strengths and weaknesses in the school are;

* Belfield Infant Assessment Programme
* Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST)
* Early Numeracy/Literacy Screening Test (Drumcondra)

These tests are administered individually or on a class basis. The BIAP is only given to a pupil whom a teacher is concerned about. The MIST test is administered on a class basis in February of each year, while the Early Literacy/Numeracy screening Tests are administered in May. Screening is used by the school to initiate the staged approach to intervention as per Revised Guidelines SEN-2017.

**Educational Psychological Assessment:**

If stages 1 and 2 fail to deliver adequate intervention, the class teacher/Principal will contact the parents for permission to secure an educational psychological assessment for their child. An assessment will determine the subsequent level of SEN intervention.

**Recording:**

Each SEN pupil has a file which is stored in the secure storage area. This file records standardised test results and end of year reports. This file is available for access to the relevant teacher as the child progresses through the school. Procedures are in place to manage sensitive data (see Data Protection Policy).

**Success Criteria:**

This policy is considered successful if;

* 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

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

Mainstream teachers, 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. At Stage 2, the responsibilities are shared with the Special Education Team. The Principal assumes 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.

A ‘Referrals to NEPS Policy’ is in place to deal with referrals to NEPS.

**Ratification & Communication:**

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

**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

Revised Guidelines for supporting pupils with SEN in mainstream schools - 2017