



St Joseph's Convent National School, Smith's Rd., Charleville, Co. Cork  
Tel: 063-89467 Email: [stjosephsconventns@gmail.com](mailto:stjosephsconventns@gmail.com) Roll:13031i

# St. Joseph's Convent N.S. Assessment Policy February 2025



St Joseph's Convent National School, Smith's Rd., Charleville, Co. Cork  
Tel: 063-89467 Email: [stjosephsconventns@gmail.com](mailto:stjosephsconventns@gmail.com) Roll:13031i

### **Introduction:**

This policy sets out our approach to assessment as an integral part of the teaching and learning process. It sets out guidance on assessment in order to assist us in identifying children with various learning needs, particularly in literacy and numeracy, in order to facilitate planning for teaching in these areas.

### **Policy Rationale:**

The core of the policy is that all children should experience success at school. This policy strives 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 this core objective. The Education Act, Section 22, requires schools to 'regularly evaluate pupils and periodically report the results of the evaluation to the pupils and their parents'. This policy is also a response to Literacy and Numeracy for Learning in Life; National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011-2012. Circular 0056/2011 and Supporting Assessment; Standardised Testing in Primary Schools; Circular 0018/2012.. The policy is based on the advice and information available from the DES & NCCA, and in particular:

- The Education Act (1998)
- The Primary School Curriculum (1999)
- The Primary Language Curriculum (2015)
- Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum – Guidelines for Schools NCCA (2007)
- The Continuum of Support Guidelines for Teachers (2007)
- Literacy and Numeracy for Learning for Life (2011)

### **Relationship to school ethos:**

Assessment is based on two approaches 'Assessment of Learning' (AOL) and 'Assessment for Learning' (AFL) and there should be a balance between the combinations of the two approaches. (Assessment in the Primary School; Guidelines for Schools).

### **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.
5. To cater for different learning styles.



St Joseph's Convent National School, Smith's Rd., Charleville, Co. Cork  
Tel: 063-89467 Email: [stjosephsconventns@gmail.com](mailto:stjosephsconventns@gmail.com) Roll:13031i

### **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 put 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/or individual education plans.

Methods of assessment will include

Self-assessment (i.e. KWL Charts, Rubrics, Thumbs up, Thumbs down, Traffic lights), Conferencing, Portfolio Assessment, Concept Mapping, Questioning, Teacher Observation, Teacher Designed Tasks and Tests and Standardised Tests. It facilitates two way communication between parents and teachers. This will lead to modification of teacher programmes, IPLPS (Individual Profile and Learning Programme) and IEPs (Individual Education Plans).

### **Equal Opportunity:**

Assessment is carried out on all pupils.

### **Assessment Approaches:**

All areas of the curriculum (That it encompasses the cognitive, creative, physical and social aspects of learning).

#### **1. Continuous Assessment (informal).**

Questionnaires may be given to pupils occasionally to assess their opinions on curricular areas i.e. problem-solving in maths / interest in / attitude to reading. This is also in line with our School's DEIS Plan. Assessment of performance and behaviour gradually builds up into a profile for each pupil over his/her school career and is a working document. It is not an official school record. An assessment folder is kept on each pupil. The pupils will be asked to choose their favourite piece of work on a topic that they enjoyed learning to put in the folder. They may be asked to write down what they learned in a class topic (KWL) or to say what they need to do to progress their learning. Sample tests from each area of the curriculum can be included in this folder. It is hoped that this process will make the pupils more aware of their own learning, standards, strengths and difficulties. As a result of self-assessing they should aim to improve their work as the year progresses.

### **Standardised Testing:**

The S.E.T team is responsible for purchasing the tests and keeping abreast of Research / new tests and is assisted by the principal and the S.E.T team. The school administers the Drumcondra Reading Test/Micra T and Sigma T standardised tests each year in May/ early June for 1st class. Senior Infants are administered the Drumcondra Early Numeracy and Literacy tests in May/June.



St Joseph's Convent National School, Smith's Rd., Charleville, Co. Cork  
Tel: 063-89467 Email: [stjosephsconventns@gmail.com](mailto:stjosephsconventns@gmail.com) Roll:13031i

The M.I.S.T is administered to Senior Infants in May . The Alpacha test is given to all Junior Infants and Senior Infants that may be presenting with early literacy needs. Therefore, children who are experiencing difficulty are targeted at the earliest opportunity and appropriate supports are arranged, in accordance with needs identified. The tests are administered by the class teacher with the help of the S.E.T. teacher. In the event of a pupil being absent on the day of testing, the S.E.T will take responsibility for administering the test to the pupil on his/ her return.

Standard and percentile rankings scores are recorded on the class record template and Aladdin by each individual teacher. These results are also kept on the Drumcondra Reading / Sigma T database on the office laptop. The principal and / or S.E.T teacher is responsible for keeping the results. The class teachers / S.E.T team analyse the results in June for allocation of resources to pupils in September.

Whole school results are recorded on Aladdin, the student management software system in a secure, encrypted site. Appropriate supports for the children experiencing difficulties will range from In-class support, Team Teaching, Literacy Lift Off, Ready Set Go Maths, and Learning Support small groups. Equally all the parents of children from First class will receive these results by recording the STEN score on school reports in June. Time is available after the issue of reports, should parents wish to consult with class teachers to discuss their child's scores.

The results are also used to inform the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plan.

#### **Diagnostic Assessment: Diagnostic Assessment:**

The school policy on Psychological Assessment is a three-step approach based on the NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service) Continuum of support process.

1. Stage 1- CLASSROOM SUPPORT
2. Stage 2- SCHOOL SUPPORT
3. Stage 3- SCHOOL SUPPORT PLUS

#### **Stage 1- CLASSROOM SUPPORT**

- Parent/Teacher share concerns and these concerns are recorded.
- Simple informal problem-solving approaches commonly used by class teachers to support emerging needs are identified.
- Support Plan is drawn up for the school term. The success of the plan is recorded on an ongoing basis.
- After 1 or 2 terms, if concerns remain, the teacher requests the involvement of SET teacher. Pupil moves to Stage 2.



#### **Stage 2- SCHOOL SUPPORT**

- Class teacher/SET teacher/parent re-assesses the child's needs.



St Joseph's Convent National School, Smith's Rd., Charleville, Co. Cork  
Tel: 063-89467 Email: [stjosephsconventns@gmail.com](mailto:stjosephsconventns@gmail.com) Roll:13031i

- IPLP is drawn up and this will involve a more systematic gathering of information and development and monitoring of the School Support Plan.
- At the end of term 1 the plan is reviewed and modified.
- Depending on the nature of the needs, the additional teaching will be within a small group or on an individual basis or a combination of both either in class or on a withdrawal basis.
- If concerns still remain, the school consults parents to request move to Stage 3.

### **Stage 3- SCHOOL SUPPORT PLUS**

- This stage applies where the needs are enduring and/or severe and complex and where progress is considered inadequate despite carefully planned and reviewed interventions.
- Parent/teacher/Educational Psychologist/Child
- School formally requests a consultation/referral with an Educational Psychologist.
- A new cycle of consultation, assessment, planning involving all concerned begins.
- A detailed IEP/IPLP, identifying agreed interventions and actions is drawn up.
- This review process will be ongoing.
- Decisions with regard to support and allocation of resources may be made at this stage if appropriate.

### **EAL Assessment:**

The school can, if needed, apply to the Department of Education for English as Additional Language (EAL) hours for children who do not speak English as their first language and meet the various criteria. The children who qualify for EAL hours will be given an initial screening test using the Primary School Assessment Kit (PSAK). This will place the children at their level under the headings of reading, writing, listening and speaking. It will also form the starting point for the teachers for their work. The teachers will then follow the Up and Away programme as well as using material they feel is suitable. The children will be assessed at the end of year using the PSAK to gauge their progress.

Applications for further EAL hours will be done based on these assessments and following discussion with EAL team, SET team, class teachers, Parents and Principal.

### **School Administered Diagnostic Tests/Screening**

In addition to the formal Standardised Tests we use a variety of diagnostic tests, where appropriate. These tests are listed below-

All children in Junior Infants to first class are screened in order to identify children experiencing difficulties in learning. Some or all of the following screening measures may be used

- Input from parents
- Teacher observation
- Teacher designed tasks and tests



St Joseph's Convent National School, Smith's Rd., Charleville, Co. Cork  
Tel: 063-89467 Email: [stjosephsconventns@gmail.com](mailto:stjosephsconventns@gmail.com) Roll:13031i

- Checklists
- Jolly Phonics teaching & test
- Resource Teaching
- British Abilities Scale Word Reading test (standardised 1996)
- The British Picture Vocabulary Scale (receptive language age)
- Student Support Plans are reviewed in January and June each year.
- Alpaca Phonics Test
- PSAK – all EAL children are tested throughout the year along with any new children that start in the middle of the year.

These will be administered by the SET team following referral by the class teachers in consultation with parents/guardians. The administration of such tests is in keeping with the approach recommended by **Circular 0013/2017** where a staged approach is used by the individual class teachers before recourse to diagnostic testing /psychological assessment. 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 with a NEPS psychologist.

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

- Drumcondra Test of Early Numeracy Screening-DTEN-S- Senior Infants
- Drumcondra Primary Reading Test-DPRT
- Micra T – Reading Test
- Sigma T- Maths Test
- Maths Class Assessments
- Teacher designed tasks and tests
- Sight Word tests- PM high-frequency words
- Alpacha phonics tests
- Free Writing samples
- Running records
- M.I.S.T

These tests are administered individually or on a class basis. Screening is used by the school to initiate the staged approach to intervention as per **Circular 0013/2017**

### **Screening**

The **ALPACA** (Assessing Letter and Phonemic Awareness Class Assistant) screening tool is being used by the Junior and Senior Infant classes. In Junior Infants, the children are screened three times a year - September/ January and June. The screener checks for understanding of rhyming, initial sounds, blending,



St Joseph's Convent National School, Smith's Rd., Charleville, Co. Cork  
Tel: 063-89467 Email: [stjosephsconventns@gmail.com](mailto:stjosephsconventns@gmail.com) Roll:13031i

letter name knowledge and deleting. The screener picks out children that may be at risk for having difficulties in these areas and may need further diagnostic assessment and intervention.

### **Psychological Assessment:**

If stages 1 and 2 fail to deliver the adequate intervention, the class teacher/S.E.T team will contact the parents for permission to arrange a psychological assessment for their child. 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 maths tests, spelling tests and running records of reading. If the allocation of assessments has been saturated in the school that year, the parents are informed that they could consider getting their child assessed privately and the school will facilitate this by supplying them with the required information from the NCSE website (a list of recommended psychologists and therapists and their details).

### **Identification of Pupils for Support:**

Following formal and informal assessments, the following children will be prioritised for supplementary teaching support;

- Those performing at or below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile in literacy or numeracy standardised tests.
- Pupils previously in receipt of supplementary teaching support who continue to experience significant difficulties.
- Pupils who are identified as having significant needs through the process of ongoing assessment as set out on the Continuum of Support Process.
- Pupils with mild or transient educational needs including those associated with speech and language difficulties, social and emotional problems, or coordination or attention control difficulties and pupils with specific learning disabilities.
- Pupils with significant educational needs.
- Pupils who present with a range of learning difficulties which may affect a pupil's ability to access the full curriculum.
- Pupils who have additional literacy or language needs including those who have English as Additional Language (EAL).
- Pupils who present as being exceptionally able who score at or above the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile in standardised tests

### **Recording:**



St Joseph's Convent National School, Smith's Rd., Charleville, Co. Cork  
Tel: 063-89467 Email: [stjosephsconventns@gmail.com](mailto:stjosephsconventns@gmail.com) Roll:13031i

Each pupil has a profile card which is stored in the filing cabinet. This file records standardised test results and records if other assessments are available. Psychological assessments and other reports from outside agencies are also stored. This file is passed from teacher to teacher as the child progresses through the system. Procedures are in place to manage sensitive data (see Data Protection Policy). The circular also outlines the availability of new report card templates developed by the NCCA which must be used for reporting the pupil's progress to parents at the end of the school year. The report card creator can be accessed at [www.reprotcard.ncca.ie](http://www.reprotcard.ncca.ie). The NCCA has also provided an information leaflet for parents which explains the standardised results. It is advised that this leaflet is enclosed with the school report. School reports are recorded and emailed through Aladdin, the student management software system in a secure encrypted site to parents in June.

The NEPS psychologist has provided the school with a form which is recommended for use with the transfer of pupils with special needs to their next school.

### **School Reports:**

Star number **5**, Highly Capable and Competent, shall be awarded to pupils who average a score of 85% - 100% over the year. This number 5 is assigned to pupils who display high competency in the subject area, having a natural ability or application. These pupils would grasp new knowledge and skills easily or would be exceptionally diligent in work and tasks completed.

Star number **4**, Capable and Competent, shall be awarded to pupils who average a score of 70% - 85% over the year. This number 4 is assigned to pupils who display competency in the subject area, having an above average ability or application. These pupils would grasp new knowledge and skills easily or would be diligent in work and tasks completed.

Star number **3**, Managing Comfortably, shall be awarded to pupils who average a score of 50% - 70% over the year. The mark 4, shall be awarded to pupils who are average, learn easily, are competent or / and work diligently in the subject area.

Star number **2**, Experiencing Some Difficulty, shall be awarded to pupils who average a score of 30% - 50% over the year. The number 2, shall be awarded to pupils who are below average, may be struggling with the relevant knowledge and skills, may not be applying themselves and who need to work harder or to put in more effort.

Star number **1**, Experiencing Significant Difficulty, shall be awarded to pupils who average a score of 0% - 30% over the year. This number 1 is assigned to pupils who display poor ability, are unable to grasp new concepts and may require additional support in school.

The Comment section within each subject area will be used to clarify and personalise certain grading of the pupil.





It should be remembered that for some pupils, whatever mark is awarded is a reflection of hard work and application and reflects the maximum that that pupil can attain in the particular subject area given their innate intelligence and individual circumstances.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Class: \_\_\_\_\_

☹ Rarely ☺ Sometimes ☺☺ Most of the time ☺☺☺ Always

| Your child as a learner                    |    |    |    |     |
|--|----|----|----|-----|
|  | ☹☹ | ☹☺ | ☺☺ | ☺☺☺ |
| Interested in learning                     |    |    |    |     |
| Listens attentively                        |    |    |    |     |
| Works well independently                   |    |    |    |     |
| Works well with other children             |    |    |    |     |
| Keeps trying even when tasks are difficult |    |    |    |     |
| Homework is of high quality                |    |    |    |     |
| Presents work carefully                    |    |    |    |     |

| Your child's social and personal development |    |    |    |     |
|--|----|----|----|-----|
|  | ☹☹ | ☹☺ | ☺☺ | ☺☺☺ |
| Happy at school                              |    |    |    |     |
| Behaves well in class                        |    |    |    |     |
| Mixes well with other children               |    |    |    |     |
| Sensitive to others' feelings                |    |    |    |     |
| Behaves well in the playground               |    |    |    |     |
| Manages and expresses own feelings well      |    |    |    |     |

| Your child's learning during the year                  |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|
|  | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ |
| ★ Experiencing significant difficulty                  |   |   |   |   |
| ★ Experiencing some difficulty ★ Managing comfortably  |   |   |   |   |
| ★ Capable and competent ★ Highly capable and competent |   |   |   |   |

| Gaeilge                 |   |   |   |   |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|---|
|                         | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ |
| Listening comprehension |   |   |   |   |
| Oral expression         |   |   |   |   |
| (Pre) Reading           |   |   |   |   |
| (Pre) Writing           |   |   |   |   |

| Mathematics                   |   |   |   |   |
|-------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
|                               | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ |
| Understanding and recalling   |   |   |   |   |
| Using procedures              |   |   |   |   |
| Reasoning and problem solving |   |   |   |   |
| Explaining and communicating  |   |   |   |   |

| Social, Environmental and Scientific Education |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|
|  | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ |
| History  |   |   |   |   |
| Geography                                      |   |   |   |   |
| Science  |   |   |   |   |

| Arts Education |   |   |   |   |
|----------------|---|---|---|---|
|                | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ |
| Music          |   |   |   |   |
| Drama          |   |   |   |   |

**How you can further support your child's learning**

**Standardised test results (if applicable)**

**Comments**

**Communication Steps:**

It is hoped that the results of assessment are reported in a way useful for pupils, teachers, parents and other interested parties.

1. A School Report is sent to the parents/guardian at the end of the school year. We give results of standardized tests for Drumcondra Reading/Micra T and Sigma-T for each class in the reports.
2. Where parents/guardians have concerns about test results or comments in school reports, they are invited to contact the class teacher/principal to discuss the same.
3. Parent/Teacher meetings are held in late November.
4. The aggregate results are reported to the Board of Management yearly and sent to the Department of Education.

**Success Criteria:**



St Joseph's Convent National School, Smith's Rd., Charleville, Co. Cork  
Tel: 063-89467 Email: [stjosephsconventns@gmail.com](mailto:stjosephsconventns@gmail.com) Roll:13031i

This policy is considered successful if;

1. Early identification and intervention is achieved
2. Clarity is achieved regarding procedures involved in a staged approach
3. Procedures are clear, with roles and responsibilities defined
4. The Special Education team have clearly defined roles and objectives
5. There is efficient transfer of information between teachers
6. There is also an efficient transfer of information between teachers & parents, the school and DES/ Second Class Schools

### **Roles and Responsibilities:**

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. At Stage 2, the responsibilities are shared with the S.E.T. The S.E.T 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.

### **Implementation:**

This policy reflects current practice in the school.

### **Ratification & Communication:**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

Signed *Denis Waters* Chairperson

### **Review Timetable:**

This policy will be reviewed every two years and will be amended as necessary by means of a whole school collaborative process.

### **References:**

DES Circular 0013/2017

DES Learning Support Guidelines 2000 [www.sess.ie](http://www.sess.ie)

Working Together to make a Difference for Children – NEPS



St Joseph's Convent National School, Smith's Rd., Charleville, Co. Cork  
Tel: 063-89467 Email: [stjosephsconventns@gmail.com](mailto:stjosephsconventns@gmail.com) Roll:13031i

| <b>Ratification Date</b> | <b>1st Review Due</b> | <b>2nd Review Due</b> | <b>3rd Review Due</b> |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| February 2025            | 2027                  | 2029                  | 2031                  |
| Completed                | Completed?            | Completed?            | Completed?            |