

# Assessment & Recording Policy

## Introduction

This policy was originally drafted following a whole-school planning day during 2008. The policy was circulated to all parents and ratified by the Board of Management. However in the interim there have been many changes in our schools approaches to assessment and therefore this policy was reviewed during May 2014.

This school policy on Assessment and Reporting is informed by Assessment in the Primary School – Guidelines for Schools (NCCA, 2007) and by the National Strategy: Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life 2011-2020.

This policy

- supports both Assessment of Learning (AfL) and Assessment of Learning (AoL) across all class levels;
- identifies a range of assessment methods used to gather information about pupil progress and achievement;
- provides practical support to the teacher in how self-assessment is expected to be used by the pupils;
- supports consistency on what information is recorded about pupil learning progress and how this information is shared with parents, teachers and other professionals.

This draft (May 2014) of our schools policy on Assessment and Reporting complies with the requirement of the National Strategy on Literacy and Numeracy. It has been drafted following extensive teacher reflection on current practices and ongoing development in our knowledge and understanding of AfL and AoL. Our schools work regarding developing our school improvement plan also informed this policy. Our aim is to enrich teaching and learning and to report pupil progress to the relevant personnel.

In formulating and operating this policy, St Michael's N.S. 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]

The development of this policy has been guided by legislative requirements enshrined in:

- 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.

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- the Data Protection (Amendment) Act (2003)
- the Equal Status Act (2000)
- the Education (Welfare) Act (2000)
- the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004)

## Aims

Through the successful implementation of this assessment policy our aims are:

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' long and short term planning
- To coordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis, etc.

St Michael's N.S. recognises the four functions of assessment as being formative, summative, evaluative and diagnostic. It was highlighted during our engagement in the school improvement process that we need to further develop our approach regarding AfL. We will endeavour that our approach to assessment will focus on the two principal, interrelated and complementary approaches namely, Assessment for Learning (AfL) and Assessment of Learning (AoL) at all class levels. This means that evidence is used on an ongoing basis to inform teaching and learning (AfL), in addition to the periodic recording of children's progress and achievements, for the purpose of reporting (AOL). The school acknowledges the importance of a concentrated focus on Assessment for Learning, the key characteristics of which we identify as follows:

- the sharing of learning intentions with pupils: since Sept 2013 all staff members are using WALT and WILF which allow for this sharing of learning outcomes with our children.
- assisting pupils in identifying and recognising the standards being aimed for;
- involving pupils in self assessment and peer assessment; from 2013 SALF folders have been introduced in all classes and are offering further opportunities for self-assessment and peer assessment
- providing pupils with feedback which will lead them to recognise the next steps in their learning and how to take them; pupils receive both written and verbal feedback
- the promotion of confidence in pupils

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- involvement of teacher and pupil in reviewing and reflecting on assessment information. This is now provided namely through utilizing SALF folders

SALF Folders ( introduced Sept 2013)

SALF folders are an important element of our school's focus on Self-Assessment and active learning practices.

Each pupil's SALF folder has as its aims –

- to provide a framework for pupils to present evidence of what they know & of what they can do;
- to provide a source of information that can be used by them to make decisions about that learning;
- to provide motivation and support for pupils in their learning;
- to communicate learning with a wider audience – Teacher/peers/other classes/home

During class meetings held in September all parents are informed of SALF folders and to date parental feedback from 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> class has been extremely positive.

Classroom practices ( WALT and WILF) and display charts now reflect our school's policy of giving clarity and direction to teaching and involving pupils in their own learning and assessment, with the aim of increasing motivation and standards.

A continuum of assessment methods is used in the school. These range from child-led to teacher-led. Through the use of WALT and WILF pupil attention is routinely drawn to learning intentions, success criteria and various self -assessment practices.

With a view to our pupils taking more responsibility for their own learning, teachers strive to ensure that pupils know:

- what they are going to learn;
- how they will recognise when they have succeeded.

To this end, the school teaching approach is one where learning intentions are shared with pupils and success criteria are established with pupils. Two characters are used to reinforce the approach-

WALT : we are learning to

WILF: what I'm looking for

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The table below outlines the main AfL and AoL techniques in practice in the school.

Assessment practice	Purpose	Operation in St Michael's N.S..
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Self-assessment &amp; SALF folders</b></p>	<p>-to enable pupil...  - to reflect on his/her performance; to document the <i>what</i> and <i>how</i> of learning.</p>	<p>SALF folders are used in all classes, to develop pupil self-assessment and personal reflection on self as learner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Awareness of the learning intention (<b>WALT /WILF</b> – We Are Learning To..) Rubrics / KWL charts etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Conferencing</b></p>	<p>-to enable pupil, with the assistance of Teacher, to reflect on his/her work.</p>	<p>Discussion on work through directed Teacher questioning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 1-1</li> <li>▪ Small groups</li> <li>▪ Whole-class</li> </ul>
<p><b>Concept Mapping</b></p>	<p>-to enable pupil graphically present his/her prior knowledge and understanding about a particular topic and to later amend and extend the map to reflect his/her new learning.</p>	<p>Concept-maps are used periodically at the start and end of lessons;</p> <p>Resources: <a href="http://www.bubbl.us">www.bubbl.us</a> and Mind Mapping by Tony Buzan.</p>
<p><b>Questioning</b></p>	<p>-to enable pupil experience a range of questions to assess the progress s/he is making in their learning.</p>	<p>A variety of questions are used to assess developing understanding of new learning; these range from closed questions, to more open questions to help promote higher order thinking.</p>

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<b>Teacher Observation</b>	-to enable Teacher observe pupil play /activity/ written work/ discussion and questioning during class or group work and record specific strengths or challenges..	Teacher noting pupil learning / social interaction development.
<b>Teacher-designed tasks and tests</b>	-to enable Teacher assess pupil learning through specific set tasks and tests.	Frequent oral and written tasks to determine pupil knowledge of the concepts and skills being taught.
<b>Standardised Tests</b>	- to establish a standardised measurement of pupil achievement in English reading and Mathematics compared to other children throughout the country at the same class level or age level.	Standardised tests are administered in accordance with the requirements of Circular 0056/2011 and to all classes from 1st – 6th.  Sigma-T, Drumcondra English are administered in May of each year. The results are shared with the parents in writing with the end-of-year Report.

Assessment information on pupils in St Michael’s N.S. is maintained through the following:

- Teacher observation
- Assessment folders: containing work samples and examples of AoL tasks and tests. Hardback copies are used in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> classes.
- SALF folders
- Individual pupils folders ( located in filing cabinet in office) containing standardised tests results
- Individual folders contain tracking sheet which clearly illustrates progression/ highlights difficulties

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Pupil Portfolio	Pupil Profile
	<p>Formal school record of pupil containing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pupil name and date of birth</li> <li>▪ home contact details</li> <li>▪ enrolment data</li> <li>▪ school attendance record</li> <li>▪ medical history (where appropriate)</li> <li>▪ information concerning experiences at pre-school / other school (if made available to the school on transfer)</li> <li>▪ the products of assessment (for example, completed standardised test booklets)</li> <li>▪ yearly STEN scores for standardised tests</li> <li>▪ copies of end-of-year Reports</li> <li>▪ continuum of support details, if applicable.</li> </ul> <p>- kept on file in school until pupil reaches age 21yrs.</p>

### Key classroom practices and strategies:

The following are considered essential -

- a positive classroom culture and ethos, which encourages pupils to think and talk about their learning and which provides a safe place for open, honest and respectful comment;
- questioning skills , which stimulate thinking and reflecting on learning and explicit teaching of how to consciously reflect on what you know and how to make an evaluative comment on it;
- frequent identification and review of learning goals through Teacher-directed discussion, clearly defining learning objectives and success criteria thereby empowering pupils and enabling them to take responsibility for their learning;

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- a recognition and acknowledgement of the purpose and importance of audience i.e. those involved (home+ school) in the pupil's learning process.

Self-Assessment & Learning Methodologies used in our school:

<b><u>Junior Inf-6<sup>th</sup> class</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ whole class charts WALT &amp; WILF</li><li>▪ whole class/individual KWL</li><li>▪ checklists</li><li>▪ rubrics</li><li>▪ thumbs up / down</li><li>▪ traffic lights</li><li>▪ mapping</li><li>▪ work samples with comments that justify selection( 3<sup>rd</sup> -6<sup>th</sup>)</li><li>▪ personal interest survey</li><li>▪ task review sheet</li><li>▪ peer review</li><li>▪ monthly progress review</li></ul>	

### **Junior and Senior Infants : SALF in Scrap book**

#### **1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> class : SALF in scrap book**

Note: During 2013-2014 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> class utilized folders but class teacher has decided from September 14 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> class will use scrap book.

Self-assessment of learning in the junior classes is collaborative, reflective and practical.

It is our aim that pupils are enabled to think about their learning and achievements and to develop the appropriate language for discussion of these. Periodic conferencing also provides an opportunity for the teacher to affirm the pupil as a learner.

Personal pupil pages in SALF folders are dedicated to developing a sense of identity and curriculum work samples ( assessment folders) provide evidence of participation and learning. Parents/guardians are invited to provide feedback on pupil learning.

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It is intended that pupils at the junior level will come to see their SALF folders as a record they have created, showing themselves as learners.

## **SALF Folders 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Class: 20-pocket**

Pupils in the senior classes are involved in -

- identifying the purpose of their SALF folders
- suggesting how they might record and report on *what* and *how* they are learning.

SPHE curricular learning objectives help establish a supportive classroom culture and ethos and direct pupil attention to the development of skills such as recognition of personal strengths and the strengths of others, goal-setting, decision-making, collaboration etc.

Whole-class SALF review sessions are also conducted in senior classes. At this level, pupils share success criteria and take responsibility for explaining and justifying their selections of work samples for inclusion in their folders. Parents/Guardians also have the opportunity to review and reflect on their child's progress in learning and self-assessment.

### **Standardised tests**

In accordance with the requirements of Circular 0138/2006, standardised tests are carried out in literacy and mathematics. It is school policy to carry out these tests as follows-

Time: May and mid-June each year

Classes: all classes 1st -6th

Administration: Class Teacher [Where a pupil is tested out of the class situation or with assistance, a note to this effect will be put on test booklet].

Exemptions: as per Circular 0138/2006

Recording of results: Results are recorded in terms of raw score, standard score, percentile rank and STEN

Reporting to parents: Results are reported to parents on the end-of-year Report

Analysis of results: Results are analysed on an individual basis by class Teachers and on a whole-school basis by Learning Support Teacher, in order to identify pupils for supplementary teaching. Whole-staff analysis of results informs teaching and learning



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practices in the school. This analysis of results has also informed our schools self evaluation and school improvement plan in both numeracy and literacy.

In addition, further to Circular 0056/2011 our school, in its implementation of the National Strategy for Literacy and Numeracy, adopts the following procedures:

- the reporting of Standardised Testing results to DES, the school BOM, parents and to a pupil's transfer school;
- the use of Standardised Testing results to inform school self-evaluation & our School Improvement Plan.

### **Interpreting, Recording and Reporting of Assessment information**

In fulfilling the requirements of the Education Act (1998) individual records of pupils' learning are created and maintained, while they are attending our school. This enables the school to provide parents with assessment reports which contain accurate and clearly accessible information about their children's progress and achievement.

Each child's individual folder stored in the office contains:

1. Pupil name and date of birth
2. home contact details
3. enrolment data
4. school attendance record
5. medical history (where appropriate)
6. information concerning experiences at pre-school / other school (if made available to the school on transfer)
7. the products of assessment (for example, completed standardised test booklets)
8. yearly STEN scores for standardised tests
9. copies of end-of-year Reports
10. continuum of support details, if applicable.

### **Report Card**

By means of our end-of-year Report Card utilizing template provided by NCCA, the school shares assessment information with parents in an accessible format so that they can use the information to help their children to learn, and thus strengthen the link between school and home. We strive for clarity and consistency in order to identify pupil -strengths, needs and progress under the following headings-

- the child as a learner
- the child's social and personal development
- the child's learning across the curriculum during the year

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- how parents can further support child's learning
- standardised test results
- Learning support/resource teacher comment if applicable
- attendance and punctuality

### **Screening:**

To facilitate the early identification of learning strengths / difficulties, the school administers the MIST screening test in Junior classes. These are administered by the Class Teacher and the results are interpreted in consultation with the Learning Support Teacher. Screening may lead to specific intervention by the class teacher in line with our Staged Approach to special needs provision. In addition, the school places strong emphasis on early intervention.

### **Diagnostic Assessment:**

Arising from the Education Act (1998) and the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act (2004), our school aims to ensure that the educational needs of all children, including those with a disability or other special educational needs are identified and provided for. To this end, formal diagnostic tests are used to determine the appropriate learning support for individual pupils who present with learning difficulties or for pupils whose standardised test scores are of concern. Diagnostic tests are administered by a Learning Support Teacher, who will interpret results and advise Class Teacher of results. The screening tests used to identify learning strengths and weaknesses in our school are –

- Belfield Infant Assessment Programme
- Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST)
- Non Reading Intelligence Test (NRIT)
- Aston Index

These tests are administered individually or on a whole class basis. The MIST test is administered on a whole class basis before Easter of each year. Screening is used by the school to initiate the staged approach to intervention as per circulars 24/03 and 02/05.

### **Exceptionally-able pupils:**

School procedures used to identify exceptionally-able pupils include Teacher observation, Standardised Tests and work samples.

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Teachers endeavour to meet the needs of exceptionally-able pupils through the use of differentiation . Alternative, more challenging textbooks are used, in addition to greater focus on problem-solving and the extension of activities where possible. Our school also refers children to CTY ( centre talented youth ) when appropriate.

## **Psychological Assessment:**

If stages 1 and 2 fail to deliver adequate intervention the class teacher / Principal will contact the parents for permission to secure a Psychological Assessment for their child . An assessment will determine the subsequent level of intervention. Where it is felt a psychological assessment or other assessment is required, this is arranged by the school using the standard consent forms. Results of psychological assessment are a key factor in the drafting of pupil IEPs. In the event of a private consultation, parents are requested to supply the school with a copy of the report in order to facilitate this. Psychological Reports are securely stored by the school and confidentiality is maintained at all times.

## **Reporting to Outside Agencies on Individual Pupils**

In the event of a request by an outside agency for a pupil assessment, the Principal will be informed and will be supplied with the report before its being forwarded. The Staff member who completes the report will keep a copy of the report and store in individual child's folder in office. A copy of the request should 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.

## **Success Criteria**

### **Practical indicators of the success of the policy will include -**

- A range of informal and formal assessment modes are used to place assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning.
- Procedures run smoothly and efficiently because there is clarity about what is expected and who is responsible for different aspects.
- Transfer of information from class teacher to class teacher happens efficiently at the beginning/end of school year.

## **Roles and Responsibility**

The coordination of this policy is the responsibility of Principal, Class Teachers and Learning Support / Resource Teachers. When a pupil is experiencing difficulty 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 Learning Support Teacher. 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.

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## Implementation and Review

The implementation of the original policy commenced in 2008. This review and redraft was carried out in 2014. The policy will be reviewed during 2015 or earlier if warranted.

## RATIFICATION

This policy was ratified by the school Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_