**Burgess National School**

**Carrigatoher**

**Nenagh**

**Co Tipperary**



**Burgess National School Mission Statement**

***At Burgess National School, we work at creating a Christian atmosphere that promotes the dignity and individuality of every pupil, enabling him/her to reach his/her full potential in a happy learning environment.***

**Assessment Policy**

**Policy on Assessment**

Introduction

This policy was drafted in Burgess N.S. in order to implement best practices in this area, as outlined by the NCCA in their guidelines. Parent/Teacher consultations are based upon the results and observations of continuous assessment. Continuous assessment includes the following:

* Teacher Observation
* Teacher designed tasks and tests
* Pupil projects and portfolios
* Self-Assessment by pupils
* Pupil Profiles
* Samples of pupil’s work
* Record Keeping
* Annual Report

**Policy Rationale:**

The core of the policy is that all children should work to their individual potential and 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 school response to their needs. An effective assessment policy is central to this core objective. This policy is implemented in conjunction with the Numeracy and Literacy Initiative. **(Circular 56/2011**)

This policy covers both Assessment of Learning (AOL), which is summative assessment - assessing how well children perform after a specified period e.g., Standardised Testing, and Assessment for Learning (AFL), which is continuous formative assessment and is used to determine future planning and teaching goals.

**Relationship to School Ethos**

The school adopts a holistic approach to the education and development of each child and the enhancement of teaching and learning processes. An effective Assessment Policy identifies early interventions that need to be put in place to ensure that each child reaches his/her potential and positive self-esteem is achieved.

**Aims and Objectives**

* To facilitate improved teaching and pupil learning
* To target needs and strengths
* To create a procedure for monitoring progress and achievement
* To identify alternative teaching and learning initiatives and learning processes which assist the long-term and short-term planning of teachers
* To co-ordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis, including storage of test and results and reporting of same.

**Forms of Assessment**

There are three main types of assessment – formative, summative and evaluative.

Formative:

* Covering a range of formal and informal assessments and enabling the teacher to modify the teaching and learning activities to improve child’s attainment. This includes self-assessment strategies. Formative Assessment is Assessment FOR learning.

Summative:

* Using teacher designed tasks and tests to provide information about the achievement of learning targets. This is Assessment OF learning.

Evaluative:

* Focusing on the achievements of the school i.e., the teaching and the learning that is taking place. This is Assessment OF Learning

Assessment Techniques

* Teacher Observation (focused, continuous, informed, and structured)
* Teacher designed tasks and tests, weekly and termly tests, projects, reports, and homework.
* Self-Assessment, e.g., 2 stars and a wish or Peer/Group Feedback
* Discussion / Conferencing
* Concept Mapping
* Checklists / Rating Scales
* Time-Sampling Recording / Event Recording
* Portfolios / Projects
* Digital Portfolios (Seesaw)
* Standardised testing
* Diagnostic Testing

**Curricular Assessment**

Each subject area on the curriculum has its own assessment criteria recorded in the Plean Scoile. The criteria cover the assessment of each of the strands of the individual subject areas.

**Screening:**

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

* Belfield Infant Assessment Programme
* Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST)
* SPAR / Parallel Spelling Test
* Sigma T (occasionally)
* Quest Screening
* Quest Diagnostic
* Drumcondra Tests of Early Literacy & Numeracy
* British Picture Vocabulary Scale
* CAT 4

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 24/03** and **Circular 02/05 and Circular 138/00.**

**Standardised Testing:**

The school utilises the Drumcondra Standardised Tests. All classes from Senior Infants upwards are tested, as per **Circular 18/2012.** The tests are usually administered in the last week of May or first week of June by the class teacher. Standard and percentile ranking scores are recorded on the class record template and stored by each individual teacher with a copy held in the resource teacher’s room. The SET analyses the results in June for allocation of resources to pupils in September.

**Test Procedure**

**Administration and Correction**

* Tests are administered by the Special Education Teachers and corrected by the Class Teacher.
* Corrected results are uploaded to the Aladdin system by the Special Education Teachers.

**Exclusion from Tests**

* Pupils may be excluded from the tests if in the view of the principal, and in line with DES guidance, they have a learning, communicative or physical disability which would prevent them from attempting the rest.
* Children may also be excluded if their level of English is such that attempting the test would inappropriate

**Recording**

* Test results will be recorded electronically (via the school data system Aladdin) by the Special Education Teacher. A class score sheet is generated and given to the class teacher. The Special Education Teacher will retain a copy for the purpose of further diagnostic testing and tracking of results.

**Tracking**

* Results of tests are tracked from year to year using percentile scores and recorded on file by the Special Education Teachers

**Storage**

* Test results are stored digitally, using the school data system Aladdin.
* Test booklets are stored for 12months in a secure filing cabinet in the central storage area, until replaced by the following year’s test. The test booklets are then shredded.
* Results are kept as per Burgess NS’s Data Protection & Record Keeping Policy – until the pupils have reached aged 26, and then shredded

**Reporting of Results**

* Children are not given the results of tests.
* Results of standardised tests are reported to parents via the end of year School Report Card
* Results are given in terms of Sten Scores and are accompanied by the teacher’s interpretation of their meaning and implication.
* Where a concern arises about a child’s tests results arises the Class Teacher will make contact with parents to discuss the concern.
* In the case of children attending the Special Education Teachers results are given during the formulation/review of the child’s School Support Plan twice yearly.
* Where children are transferring to other Primary Schools or Secondary schools’ results may be forwarded to them without permission from parents. In this event Sten scores are shared with the school and not percentile scores.
* The school will report aggregate standardised test results for 2nd, 4th and 6 th Class (via EsiNet) once annually to the Department of Education.

**Test Analysis**

* Test results will be analysed by the Class Teachers and the Special Education Teachers and discussed on a whole-school basis. These results will be used to both monitor the child’s progress and to inform classroom planning. (The results may also be used in the school’s self-evaluation process)

Note: Parents are not given copies of the test. The Class Teacher may show the completed test booklet to parents if requested, and if this is appropriate in individual circumstances. A parent may view their child’s booklet in the presence of the teacher. No photographs are permitted.

**Diagnostic Assessment**

Special Education Teachers administer any Diagnostic Test deemed necessary. In house diagnostic testing takes place following classroom intervention and the completion of the Classroom Support Plan (as per staged approach) and following referral by the Class Teacher in consultation with parents. A suitable diagnostic test from the list below will be chosen by the Special Education Teacher in consultation with the Class Teacher. The Administration of such tests is in keeping with Circulars 02/05, 0014/2017 and 0018/2021, where a staged approach is used by individual Class Teacher before recourse to diagnostic testing or psychological assessment. See also Special Education Policy

The diagnostic tests used in the school include.

* Neale Analysis
* Jackson – Get Reading Right
* Maths Tracker

**Psychological Assessment**

A psychological Assessment may be recommended to provide us with:

* Additional information about a child’s difficulties.
* Advice about teaching strategies and resources.
* Assistance in applying for other support e.g., Special Needs Assistants.

**A Psychological Assessment is recommended where**:

* The results of diagnostic testing carried out by the Special Education Teacher warrant further assessment and a Special Education condition, learning disability or specific learning difficulty is suspected.
* Having initiated a School Support Plan with a child, little progress is taking place.
* There appears to be a marked discrepancy between perceived ability and performance.
* There are several emotional and / or behavioural problems.

**Provision of Psychological Assessment**

* Psychological Assessments may be done privately or done through the school.
* The school is assigned a school psychologist through NEPS scheme (National Educational Psychological Service). Our current school psychologist is Maire McNamara.
* In the event of our Educational Psychologist not being available (e.g., Maternity leave) the school then has access to psychological assessments through the Scheme for Commissioning Psychological Assessments SCPA, which is administered by NEPS. The number of educational assessments provided under this scheme is at the discretion of NEPS.
* Priority is given to younger children with Special Education Conditions and/or serious Learning Difficulties and children in Sixth Class who may be leaving the school with undiagnosed Learning Disabilities. •
* Parents may choose to arrange an assessment privately through a private Educational Psychologist or other agency.

**Procedure for Psychological Assessment**

* Class Teacher in consultation with the Special Education Teacher recommends an Assessment.
* Parental consent is sought for the Assessment.
* When consent is obtained a decision is made about the provision of the assessment.
* Where the assessment is to be carried out with NEPS Psychologist, the Principal contacts NEPS to arrange for a school visit. Consent forms / referral forms are completed with parents in advance. The NEPS Psychologist will meet with staff and/or parents, before observing the pupil and carrying out the assessment, when appropriate. A report is issued to the school follow the visit(s).
* Where the Assessment is to be carried out through SCPA, the Principal contacts an Educational Psychologist and a date for the assessment is arranged. Consent / Referral forms are completed by parents & school. The Assessment takes place in the school. After the Assessment, the Psychologist meets with the Parents. The Psychologist meets with the Class Teacher and Special Education Teacher. A report is sent to the parents and to the school.
* The School Support/School Support Plus Process is initiated.

**Recording & Storage of Assessments**

Class Based Assessments / Tests: E.g., Class tests, portfolios, concept maps, check lists etc. These tests are usually sent home with pupils at the end of the week / month / school year. A selection of samples will be provided to the incoming Teacher to inform their knowledge and understanding of the incoming class. Results of tests may be stored securely in the classroom filing cabinet by the Class Teacher for reference. These along with any incidental observation notes by the teacher are shredded at the end of the school year.

**Standardised Test Results**

* Test results will be recorded electronically (via the school data system Aladdin) by the Special Education Teacher.
* A class score sheet is generated and given to the class teacher. The Special Education Teacher will retain a copy for the purpose of further diagnostic testing and tracking of results.
* Test results are stored digitally, using the school data system Aladdin.
* Test booklets are stored for 12months in a secure filing cabinet in the central storage area, until replaced by the following year’s test. The test booklets are then shredded.
* Class Results sheets, along with school reports are kept as per Burgess NS’s Data Protection & Record Keeping Policy – until the pupils have reached aged 26, and then shredded.

**Diagnostic / Psychological Assessments**

* Results of any such testing are kept securely in the pupil’s individual file in the central storage filing cabinet.
* These are kept as per Burgess NS’s Data Protection & Record Keeping Policy – until the pupils have reached aged 26, and then shredded.

**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. Stage 1 involves in-class testing and observation by the teacher of the child. 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.

**Implementation:**

**Appendix A**

* lists new initiatives such as WALT, WILF that stress the importance of assessment for learning as opposed to assessment of learning alone.
* This policy supersedes the previous policy and is effective from February 2022.

**Appendix B**

* lists the continuum of assessment as outlined by the NCCA.

**Review Timetable:**

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

**References:**

* DES Circulars
* DES Learning Support Guidelines 2000
* Working Together to make a Difference for Children – NEPS
* [www.sess.ie](http://www.sess.ie/)
* [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie)
* [www.sdps.ie](http://www.sdps.ie)
* Chairperson’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Date of Ratification: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix A**

**Assessment for Learning**

While we acknowledge the role of standardised summative assessment as a measurable and quantifiable form of assessment, we also recognise that these tests only show us how a child is performing on one day or, in some instances, within one hour. Howard Gardner, the founder of the theory of multiple intelligences believes that formal testing engages primarily the linguistic and logical mathematical faculties. Therefore, if one has high linguistic and logical mathematical intelligences, one is likely to do well in school and in formal testing. Poor endowment in one of or both of these intelligences is likely to result in poor standardised test results. When you consider standardised testing, there is little regard for the learning style or the ability of the pupil taking the test. Indeed, it has been said that many of the great thinkers of our time would have failed our traditional standardised tests.

As a result, it is of great importance to recognize the many differing ways in which children learn and to plan according to the needs of our pupils. Consequently, we endeavour to incorporate the principles of Assessment for Learning into the teaching and learning in our school.

Key Principles of Assessment for Learning

1. AfL is regarded as being embedded in the learning experience.
2. It involves sharing the learning intentions with the pupils.
3. It aims to help pupils to recognize the standards to aim for to improve their work.
4. It involves the teacher asking questions to determine what his/her pupils know and where they are in their learning.
5. It involves pupils in peer and self-assessment.
6. It provides comment-based feedback which leads to pupils recognizing the next steps in their learning

**AfL in our school:**

* Teachers acknowledge that AfL or formative assessment occurs minute-by-minute, hour-by-hour, and day-by-day.
* This year we have started the practice of sharing the learning intentions with the pupils using the WALT acronym (We Are Learning To). Alternatively, pupils are given a key question that they will be able to answer by the end of the lesson. The learning intention is displayed visibly at the start of the lesson.
* Pupils are aware of the success criteria using the WILF acronym (What I’m Looking For) which describes how they know whether or not they have achieved the learning intentions.
* The learning intention and success criteria are written in clear, concise child-friendly language.
* Pupils engage in peer assessment using the Two Stars and a Wish strategy in Junior Classes and the Rubrics method in Senior Classes.

When using the Two Stars and Wish strategy pupils are asked to assess either their own work or that of another pupil by expressing two things they really liked about the work (stars) and one thing that could have made the work better (wish).

The Rubrics strategy for assessment has two main features. It lists (1) a list of criteria, giving the important elements of the work and (2) a set of statements which describe different levels of quality in the work. The combination of these two elements of the rubric helps to build up a picture for the teacher and the pupil of what success will ‘look like’ in the activity or piece of work. Over time the pupils themselves can be involved in identifying the important elements of their work, and in creating suitable rubrics in collaboration with the teacher.

* Pupils engage in self-assessment, thereby helping them to take ownership of their learning by looking at their work in a reflective way and identifying aspects of it that are good and area where there is room for improvement. This is done through the use of smiley faces/traffic lights/thumbs up/thumbs down.
* ‘Talk Partners’ are a feature of middle and senior classes where pupils discuss their answers in pairs, reflecting and talking through their ideas together.
* Pupils are given descriptive feedback by the teacher where possible, which emphasises the steps the pupils can take to improve their work. This can take the form of oral or written expression.

Final Thoughts:

Assessment of and for learning are both important. We acknowledge that it is not an either/or affair since both are interrelated and complement each other. What is important is to find a balance between both forms of assessment.

Appendix B:

