



ASSESSMENT & REPORTING POLICY



Assessment and Recording Policy Jonah Special School

Introduction

There is a legislative requirement for schools to have an assessment policy and the guidelines set out the relevant implications for recording and reporting about student's progress and achievement. The implications of the Education Act (1998), Data Protection Act (2018), the Equal Status Act (2000), Education (Welfare) Act (2000), the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004) and the Freedom of Information Acts (1997 & 2003) are outlined. The guidelines also include some useful information on the roles of the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS), the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) and the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) in supporting student's learning.

This school policy on Assessment and Reporting is informed by Assessment in the Primary School – Guidelines for Schools (NCCA, 2007) and by Ireland's Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy 2024-2033. It was originally formulated in collaboration with the Principal, teaching staff and the Clinical Director in May 2015 and is reviewed regularly.

All students should experience success at school. Fundamental to our approach to the curriculum at Jonah Special School is the ability and commitment to adapt teaching to the unique qualities and needs of each student. This policy endeavours to identify, at the earliest possible opportunity, knowledge of the strengths and difficulties which our students present with. Central to this is the need for an effective assessment policy. Assessment is the process of gathering, recording, interpreting, using and reporting information about a student's progress and achievement in developing knowledge, skills and attitudes.

The Primary Curriculum emphasises in general terms, the importance of assessment in enabling the teacher to extend and enrich students learning across all curriculum areas. Research has highlighted more specifically how teachers can use assessment to make learning more enjoyable, more motivating and more successful for each student. The renewed focus on assessment recognises the growing confidence *"that assessment can be used as a means of increasing student achievement and not simply as a means of measuring it"* (O'Leary, 2006).

Our belief, supported by empirical research, is that a carefully personalised curriculum and education, planned and delivered and using evidence-based principles, has the potential to remove the barriers of learning faced by children with autism. This allows us to tailor the curriculum that best meets the needs of each student, with an appropriate emphasis on developing functional, life-enhancing skills and knowledge and on teaching appropriate behaviours. The curriculum has the flexibility to address the individual and very specific needs of each student. Our ultimate goal is to improve learning through effective assessment practices, ensuring that each student is enabled to reach their full potential.

Aims and Objectives

- To facilitate improved student learning and create a procedure for monitoring achievement.
- To track learning processes which assist the long and short term planning of teachers.
- To co-ordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis involving parents and students in managing strengths and weaknesses.



Purpose of Assessment

- To provide a context in which our students can demonstrate what he/she knows and understands.
- Provide motivation, challenge and encouragement to the student to ensure good progress. Provide a baseline measure to ensure that teaching and learning begins at an appropriate level.
- Inform planning and target setting for individual student and small groups of student.
- Track and monitor the progress of individual students and groups of students.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of existing strategies.
- Reinforce the delivery of each student's personalised curriculum by enabling the learning needs of each individual student to be identified and allow future teaching strategies based on evidence.
- Gathering and reporting information for students, parents, colleagues and outside agencies.
- To aid smooth transitions between classes within the school and transitions into other educational settings or agencies.

Methods and Range of Assessment

A wide variety of assessment methods are used within Jonah Special School as per the Continuum of assessment

- Intuitive Assessment – unplanned, unrecorded and ongoing
- Planned Interactions – more visible, may be recorded, and is related to Learning Outcomes/competencies
- Assessment events – Distinct, visible, recorded events.

Intuitive Assessment

- Intuitive assessment occurs naturally and is integrated into pedagogy.
- Class teachers are interacting with students on an ongoing basis during learning experiences.
- Intuitive assessment can be invisible yet still an intentional activity for the teacher and is a very real and important part of the continuum of assessment.
- Students are usually unaware that they are being assessed as it is integrated into the learning experiences.
- Examples of intuitive assessment include teachers posing questions to scaffold learning and being flexible and responsive to indications of children's misconceptions.

Planned Interactions

- Planned Interactions are more visible and may be recorded.
- They are related to each student's individual Learning Outcomes. These are outlined in the students' IEP.
- Each student is given specific long term learning outcomes to be achieved which are broken down into short term outcomes that are assessed daily or weekly. Data is continuously collected to oversee students' progress and ensure continuous learning and success.
- It also highlights difficulties the students may have which allows teachers to adapt and respond accordingly.
- As some students in our school are of Post Primary age, they are participating in the Junior and Senior Cycle Level One and Level Two Learning Programmes. These are continuously assessed through Classroom Based Assessments and through creating their portfolios.



Assessment Events

- Baseline assessments are conducted prior to where possible or else within the first few weeks of term for all new students starting in Jonah Special School. This allows us to obtain a clear picture of the child's strength & needs and allows for planning, programming, and teaching to begin at the right level. Assessment tools utilised may include –

Assessment	Person responsible
VB-MAPP	Teacher and/or Clinical Director
ABLLS-R: Assessment of Basic Language & Learning Skills	Teacher and/or Clinical Director
AFLS: Assessment of Functional Living Skills	Teacher and/or Clinical Director
PEP- 3	Teacher and/or Clinical Director
T-TAP	Teacher and/or Clinical Director

- In addition, annual assessment of student's progress through their IEP is carried out, and teachers assess progress on individual goals and monitor this progress closely through the use of short term objective setting.
- Classroom Based assessments are carried for the Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle Level One and Level Two Short courses and Elective Modules.
- Individual Portfolios are created and assessed daily as part of the Level One and Level Two programmes and devised if needed.

Recording

The purpose of recording is to –

- Inform planning, programme and target setting.
- Monitor progress on a moment to moment basis along with monitoring termly and annual progress.
- Document evidence of learning and identify and analyse strengths and weaknesses.
- Recognise achievements and celebrate with the school community and family.
- Provide a summary for discussion, and inform verbal and written reports
- Produce a portfolio document for each student participating in the Junior and Senior Cycle Level 1 and Level 2 learning Programmes.
- Form a basis of reporting to parents, DES and other agencies.

What is Recorded?

- Students' progress throughout all areas of their personalised curriculum. This is achieved through data collection on student's responses both within their discrete learning targets and within wider curriculum activities.
- Termly and annual progress through IEP and annual reports along with monthly work plans.
- Qualities, skills, achievements and interests as well as dietary requirements through student's profiles.
- Data on the effectiveness of behaviour support strategies as integrated into the students IEP/Student Support File. These are specific to each student and created based on functional assessment(s) and only where deemed appropriate by the class teacher and Clinical Director.
- Highlights from the day through the home-school communication book.
- Results of formal assessments and accreditations e.g. ABLLS, T-Tap, PEP 3, etc.



What records are kept?

What records are kept?	Where are they kept?
Student Profiles	Teacher folders
Monthly Work Plan – Cuntas Míósúil	Student folder when in use. Principal's office when completed
CBA's for Junior and Senior Learning Programmes	Student Junior Cycle Portfolio Folder
Student Support File	Teachers Folder & Principal's Office.
IEP	A copy is kept in the teacher's folder. When completed they are stored in the Principals office. All information regarding IEP meetings are stored in the Principals office
Home/School Correspondence Books	When in use by the classroom teacher on the students desk then transferred to student's bag. When completed sent home to parents.
Termly Plans	When in use in teachers own folders.
Long & Short Term Objectives	When in use in students own folder. Then archived once mastery has been met.
Attendance	Roll books held in classrooms.
Data Collection Sheets	Held on file in classroom at student's desk.
Incident and Injury Report Forms	Stored in Incident folder in each classroom

Reporting

Arrangements for reporting to parents/carers –

Daily –

Parents/carers receive a daily home school journal communication containing information about the student's day. This book will contain information of a personal nature in addition to information about specific skills that parents/carers/teachers have indicated that they would particularly like to hear about.

IEP Meetings –

IEP Meetings are scheduled for October and April each academic year. Parents will be allocated a time and arrangements made to re-schedule if unable to attend. Invitations will be extended to external professionals working with the student i.e. SLT, OT, psychology etc. where feasible.

Success Criteria

This policy is considered successful if –

- Clarity is achieved regarding procedures involved in a staged approach.
- Procedures are clear, with roles and responsibilities defined.
- Staff have roles and objectives.
- There is efficient transfer of information between teachers/staff.



Roles and Responsibilities

Class Teachers, Clinical Director, and the Principal assume shared responsibility for assessment. It is the responsibility of the class teacher and Clinical Director to train staff in interventions for individual students.

Implementation

This policy reflects current practice in the school.

Jonah Special School

Assessment and Recording Policy

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management of Jonah Special School at its meeting held on:

Ratified by the Jonah Board of Management on: _____

Date

Signed: _____

Principal

Signed: _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

Next Review Period: *September 2028*