



**St. Michael's House
Grosvenor School
Assessment Policy
2023**

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1. Introduction: Assessment

St Michael's House Grosvenor School, Leopardstown Road, Dublin 18 is a school for children with moderate, severe and profound general learning disabilities, and autism. The school aims at promoting the optimum social, educational and personal development of its pupils. Based on the Department of Education and Skills curricula, programmes are devised for each child tailored to their individual needs, covering all curriculum areas at Primary and post Primary levels. The curriculum focuses on developing and enhancing the skills that the children possess by using a structured approach, where each child's day, is well organised and planned.

This policy is informed by guidance from the Department of Education, the NCSE, Junior Cycle framework where appropriate.

Circular 0028/2015 (Special Education teaching allocation) Acknowledges that standardized testing is not appropriate for many students in special schools and that students' individual needs are at the core of assessment rather than test scores.

The NCCA Primary Curriculum Framework 2023 states assessment should be inclusive and flexible.

Assessment in our school is child-centred, inclusive and developmental, recognising that pupils demonstrate learning in many ways.

2. Rationale

Assessment supports teachers in understanding how each student learns, what supports are effective, and how progress is made. It ensures teaching is responsive, individualised and focused on student engagement, communication and wellbeing.

3. Aims

Assessment is used to:

- Support teaching and learning
- Identify pupils' strengths, needs and interests
- Inform planning and differentiation
- Monitor progress over time
- Celebrate achievement in meaningful and appropriate ways

For pupils with complex needs, assessment focuses on **progress, engagement, communication, independence and wellbeing**, rather than comparison with age-related norms.

TYPES OF ASSESSMENT USED

Before a form of assessment is administered the following is considered.

- *What is the student's preferred way of learning?*
- *How best does s/he process information?*
- *How does s/he communicate his/her needs?*
- *How can we integrate new experiences for this student with their prior learning?*
- *How can we improve his/her ability to remember and anticipate what is important to him/her?*
- *What, if any, additional visual/auditory supports are useful to this student?*
- *What approaches does/can s/he take to problem solve situations?*
- *How does the student form attachments and interact socially?*
- *What does the student know (starting point)? → what does s/he need to know (progression)?*

4.1 Assessment for Learning (AfL)

Used daily to inform teaching:

- Observation of engagement and response
- Use of visuals, objects of reference and AAC
- Response to prompts and supports
- Feedback through praise, symbols or reinforcement

AfL, A selection of the following assessments are used by all teachers:

- Portfolios- To include work samples, photos of participation, video on an online platform, certificates of achievement.
- Teacher observation- Structured and incidental
- Teacher designed tasks and tests: including Objects of Reference recognition assessment, PECS Assessments & Photo Recognition assessment.
- Self-assessment- Can pupils make choices, indicate preferences and reflect using their preferred communication methods.
- Conferencing
- Questioning
- Discussion at IEP meetings
- Commercial Image sets
- Checklists

AfL Used by teachers in the Senior Section of the school

Junior Cycle Level 1 is being taught to post primary students and is assessed through ongoing classroom work.

Assessment booklets and checklists are available as part of the Junior Cycle programme.

Teachers have the following assessments available to them throughout the school.

- Routes for Learning (Severe and Profound students)
- Pathways to Independence (checklist of self-help personal and social skills)
- Motivation Assessment Scale
- BLS Junior Vocabulary Assessment
- The Pragmatic Profile of everyday communication skills in Children
- Early Literacy Test
- Assessing the Early Learner
- Basic Number Diagnostic Test
- ABLLS Assessment Manual (Teachers who have attended associated training)
- Affls- Assessment for functional learning and support
- Assessment Dolch List
- Assessment Checklist Early Maths Activities

Assessments are made available to staff via Office 365. These are accessed through Teams or SharePoint. Teachers can update assessment templates and share new assessments that they find useful to add it to our catalogue.

4.2 Assessment of Learning (AoL)

Used to summarise progress over time:

- Individual Education Plan (IEP) targets and outcomes
- Checklists and developmental continua
- Portfolio evidence (photos, work samples)
- Cuntas Míósúil and end-of-year reports

4.3 Examples of Assessment of Learning (AoL)

- Psychological Assessment

A psychological assessment stating the ability level of each student is completed before a student is admitted to the school. Further psychological assessment may be done to establish more refined needs if this is required. This is also completed before leaving the school.

- Individual Education Plans

Individual Education Plans are devised in October, with parents, teacher, principal and with the multidisciplinary team to establish more focused learning goals to meet the learning needs of each student. Reports on the achievement of these goals are reported on, at the end of the school year.

4.4 Diagnostic / Baseline Assessment

Used to establish starting points:

- Teacher observation
- Information from parents/guardians
- Reports from psychologists, therapists and medical professionals

5. ASSESSMENT METHODS

Assessment methods may include:

- Teacher observation and professional judgement
- Work samples and photographs
- Checklists
- AAC responses (choice making, eye gaze, switches)
- Continuum of assessment/curriculum Pathways
- Behavioural and functional assessments
- Reports from external professionals (NEPS, CDNT, NCSE)

6. Individual Education Plans (IEP's)

Assessment informs the development and review of:

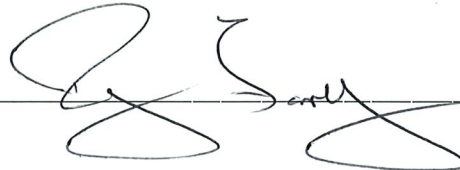
- Individual Education Plans
- Short-term and long-term targets
- Support strategies and interventions

IEP's are:

- Reviewed bi-annually
- Informed by assessment evidence
- Developed collaboratively with parents/guardians and professionals

Ratified by the Board of management: Date: 14/01/2026

Date for review of this policy: 13/01/2027

Chairperson  Date: 14/01/2026

Principal John M. Fitzpatrick Date: 14/01/2026