

St. Patrick's De La Salle Boys National School

Psychological Assessment Policy

Introductory Statement:

This Policy document has been put in place to enable the school access the services which are now being provided by the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS) and to ensure resources are being allocated equitably on a needs basis.

Rationale:

The Policy was formulated as a consequence of

- The passing into legislation of the Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act (EPSEN) 2005
- Enabling the Special Education Team to formulate appropriate Individual Education Plans
- Conforming to the requirements of the Education Act 1998

Aim:

- To provide the greatest amount of educational opportunities possible through early recognition of problem areas in a child learning
- To enable proper supports to be put into place at the earliest possible juncture
- To allow for adequate and effective assessment monitoring and review of each child's progress

Staff Roles and Responsibilities:

It is the responsibility of each class teacher, in consultation with the Principal to ensure that children with learning difficulties requiring support are catered for adequately at the earliest possible stage. The Special Education Team then work with each prioritized child in association with the class teacher as per circulars 24/03 and 02/05

Relationship to the Characteristic Ethos of the School:

St. Patrick's De La Salle Boys National School endeavors to optimise learning opportunities for each child and this policy is in keeping with that aim, through ensuring that the individual learning needs of each pupil are understood and an effective whole school response is put in place which enables optimum potential to be reached.

Methodology:

- It is the aim of the school to identify potential learning difficulties as early as possible. Senior Infants at risk are screened by the Learning Support Teacher through the use of the Belfield Infant Assessment Profile and/or Early Literacy Test at beginning of school year. This screening is carried out in consultation with the class teacher.
- Teacher observation is central to all interventions at Infant level
- The Middle Infant Screening Test (M.I.S.T) is used at Senior Infant level (Easter) to enable effective continued monitoring.
- If at this stage a child is adjudged to have a perceived behavioural difficulty the school will advise parents/guardians to consult their G.P re the possibility of securing a Behavioural Assessment.
- Children must be 6 years of age before application is made for psychological assessment. This may be received if a class teacher/parents have serious ongoing concerns and the “staged approach” has failed to ensue improvement.
- Sigma/Micra T Profiling is used from First Class onwards. These profiles are retained in a central location and passed on to the relevant teachers at the commencement of each school year.
- The school endeavours to secure at least 3 or more Psychological Assessments per year
- Once the younger children have been prioritized older children will be assessed if the yearly quota has not been exceeded.

Criteria for Assessment:

The school recognizes the importance and effectiveness of early intervention, and consequently bases early identification processes on

- Teacher observation
- Inability to function during normal school routines
- Language disorder
- Underperformance
- Non-age appropriate behaviour

The school will also make recommendations to parents if children present with other problems, which do not fall under the remit of an Educational Psychologist.

The school will retain a file on children who have been assessed detailing recommendations for Learning Support, Resource Teaching and Exemptions from Irish.

The school will also retain evidence of those who were offered assessments but refused to take up the offer or on those who secured Private Assessments.

Procedure:

- Once prioritisation is complete, contact is made with the school psychologist

- Psychological referral forms are issued to parents based on the schools criteria for Assessment
- A meeting between parents class teacher and psychologist is set up
- An assessment follows once all parties are satisfied the “staged approach” as advocated in Circulars 24/03 and 02/05 has failed to address perceived difficulties
- A Confidential analysis of test results is presented to the school, the parents, the SEN team and the class teacher
- Appropriate support services are put in place by the Principal.

Success Criteria:

Evaluation is based on

- Regular testing
- Consultation with L.S and Resource teacher
- Teacher and Parent observation