R Rannóg Pholasaí,
Curaclaim agus Measúnachta,
An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna,
Sráid Mhaoilbhríde
Baile Atha Cliath 1

AN ROINN | DEPARTMENT OF
OIDEACHAIS | EDUCATION
AGUS SCILEANNA | AND SKILLS

Curriculum and Assessment
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Marlborough Street
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To: Boards of Management, Principal Teachers and Teaching Staff of Primary Schools and Special Schools
CEOs of ETBs

Information in relation to Actions under the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy
Standardised Testing, Reporting, Library Support and Other Matters

Academic Year 2014/15 and Subsequent Years

Circular 0027/2015

1. Education Passport

As indicated in Circular 45/2014, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) has developed a suite of materials to support the reporting and transfer of pupil information from primary to post-primary schools. The materials are presented under the umbrella title of "Education Passport" and are available at www.ncca.ie/transfer. These materials were made available to schools on an optional basis for the academic year 2013/14.

From this academic year 2014/15, schools are required to use the NCCA Education Passport materials to support the reporting and transfer of pupil information at the end of sixth class. The Education Passport should be sent to the relevant post-primary school following confirmation of enrolment and, ideally, by the end of June before entry to second level.

The Education Passport Materials include
- The standard *6th Class Report Card Template* for completion by schools.
- The *My Profile* sheet for completion by pupils in primary schools before being shared with their parents/guardians.
- The *My Child's Profile* sheet for completion by parents/guardians. This should be sent with the *My Profile* sheet to parents/guardians by the end of the second week of June at the latest. Parents may complete the *My Child's Profile* should they wish to do so. The primary school should forward *My Child's Profile,* if completed, along with the pupil's *My Profile* sheet and the 6th Class Report Card to the post-primary school.

The Education Passport materials have been developed by the NCCA, following an extensive period of engagement with stakeholders, to support the dual purpose of reporting to parents and of transferring pupil information to post-primary schools once enrolment has been confirmed.

For more information about the administration of the Education Passport, schools should refer to the FAQs at www.ncca.ie/transfer.

2. Standardised Testing in Primary Schools – Returns for 2014/15

Thank you all for your continued co-operation in providing the results of your standardised testing via the Esinet online system. **All** primary schools responded last year. We fully acknowledge the work of school staff in this regard.

You will have recently received funding for 2014/2015 standardised testing. These funds may be used to purchase test instruments and materials such as teachers' manuals, test scoring services or test-related software offered by test providers. Any funds remaining after the standardised testing costs have been met may be spent on diagnostic tests, in accordance with a school's needs.

During May/June 2015, you should carry out the tests in accordance with circulars 0056/2011 and 0018/2012 available at www.education.ie. The results of these tests must be uploaded onto the Esinet portal on or before **19th June 2015.**

A **Step by Step** guide to uploading the returns is attached in the **appendix. It is particularly important that all schools, including special or infant schools without a second class, read and follow the directions in the appendix, where applicable.**

Schools are reminded of their reporting obligations in Part 7 of Circular 0056/2011: Reporting and Using the Results of Assessments to Improve Pupil Learning. These include:

  ➢ Reporting to parents: Schools are reminded that they should issue a written report to their parents in sufficient time, before the closure of the school for the summer vacation, to allow parents a reasonable opportunity to seek meetings with the principal and/or teacher(s) to discuss the written report, if necessary.
  ➢ Using report card templates: Note that all primary schools must use the standard report card template (available at www.ncca.ie) for reporting to parents on pupils' progress and achievement at school
  ➢ Reporting, analysing and using assessment information at school level
  ➢ Reporting information from standardised tests to their board of management
  ➢ Transferring assessment data in instances when pupils move to a different school
  ➢ Reporting standardised test results to the Department of Education and Skills

Note that the administration of standardised tests to whole classes is inappropriate at infant class level. Standardised tests, if used before the end of first class, should be administered in small groups only. See www.ncca.ie for more information.

3. Resource Teaching and Learning Support

The Department of Education and Skills is currently considering potential revisions to the existing system of allocating Resource Teaching/Learning Support resources to schools.

Please note that, as previously indicated in Circular 45/14, the standardised test data being returned by schools may be used to inform the development and potential implementation of a revised model to allocate Resource Teaching/Learning Support teachers for schools.

4. Support for Parents

As part of the Department's strategy to improve children's literacy and numeracy skills, the National Adult Literacy Agency developed the website www.helpmykidlearn.ie. This provides some suggestions for enjoyable activities in which parents and their children can engage.

We would encourage schools to:

- add a link from the school website to www.helpmykidlearn.ie (a great many of you have done this already).
- mention the website to new parents visiting the school in May/June.
- recommend it to parents as a source of suggestions for enjoyable activities in which parents and their children can engage.
- encourage staff to access the website and mention it in parent/teacher meetings.

In addition, the National Adult Literacy Agency has promotional posters and bookmarks with information about the website *Help My Kid Learn*, and how parents can support their children's learning over the summer. If you would like to order a free promotional pack for your school, email mmurray@nala.ie.

5. Public Libraries Support for Schools

The establishment of a collaborative approach for the provision of educational support and leisure reading materials between schools and public libraries is an objective of the public library strategy 2013-2017 *Opportunities for All*. A number of standard services which all public libraries will make available to primary schools has been identified and agreed nationally. These services are outlined below.

The public library provides a wide range of resources and activities that aim to support primary schools in developing children's literacy, numeracy, creativity and communication skills. Building upon existing partnerships between schools and libraries has many potential benefits for public libraries and primary schools.

A catchment of primary schools has been identified for each library branch. This information is available on the public libraries' website at www.librariesireland.ie/services-to-schools

Each partner library branch will provide the services outlined below and will liaise directly with each primary school during the school year. In the case of certain schools, some of the services will be provided by the mobile library, school library van or through the library headquarters, to be determined at local discretion. Under the collaborative approach, each library service will make contact with the school principal in the near future, and again towards the beginning of each school year. Such contact will provide information in relation to the library services and resources available to each school.

The range of library services offered to primary schools includes the following:

- Facilitating class visits from primary schools, arranged locally in advance

- Providing a dedicated teacher's card on request to every teacher in every primary school to enable each teacher to borrow items for his/her class

- Making presentations on the library services for each school, as requested by the school, at a time agreed with the principal, as part of in-service training. The presentation may be facilitated at the school and can be made to teachers, pupils and/or parents. Schools may cluster together for this presentation, if desired.

- Providing:
    - Reading and curriculum support materials
    - Online learning resources
    - Resources and reference materials to support school projects

- Providing a reading space for children and access to electronic resources in each partnered library service

- Providing reference resources and research assistance to pupils and teachers for school project work

- Providing information for parents about the range of library resources and the activities available to support the development of their children's literacy and numeracy skills

- Providing ongoing library programmes and initiatives throughout the year, including an annual summer activities' programme, to support the continuing development of children's literacy and numeracy skills

- Providing access to a wide range of historical material about the local area, including maps, photographs, documents and information.

6.   <u>Review of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy</u>

The publication in January 2015 of the very positive results of the National Assessments of English Reading and Mathematics indicate that all of the overall targets at primary level, which were set out in the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy published in 2011, have now been met. In this welcome context, an interim review of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy planned for 2016 has now been brought forward to 2015. The 2015 interim review of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy will provide an opportunity to establish new attainment targets that will increase our expectations and aspirations for all of our young people between now and 2020.

Schools are encouraged to consult www.education.ie regularly for news of further developments.

Breda Naughton
Principal Officer
Curriculum & Assessment Policy Unit
April 2015

Appendix

<p style="text-align:center"><u>STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO UPLOADING RETURNS</u>
<u>(Special and Infant Schools – See below)</u></p>

In order to upload the returns, please **fully complete** the following steps:

DATA ENTRY

1. The designated **data entry** person in your school should log onto the Esinet portal, click on 'Literacy and Numeracy Returns', and then 'CAP Application', before entering the results of the tests on the form on screen, and clicking '**Submit'**.
2. Once the scores are submitted, the data entry person should log out.

APPROVER

3. The designated **approver** in your school should then log onto the Esinet portal, click on 'Literacy and Numeracy Returns', and then 'CAP Application'.
4. If the approver is satisfied that the correct scores have been entered, he/she should click '**Approve'**.
5. A message will appear to say 'Thank you. Your records have been successfully approved'.
6. The approver should then click '**Finish'**.

Please note the following points in relation to the uploading of returns on the Esinet portal:

➢ All returns must be submitted **<u>online</u>**. Postal returns will **<u>not</u>** be processed
➢ Returns should be submitted by the <u>designated</u> data entry person in your school **<u>and</u>** then approved by the <u>designated</u> approver
➢ Submitted returns will **<u>not</u>** show up in the **OLCS** approval list. The approver must log into the application and approve the data

<u>IMPORTANT NOTE FOR SPECIAL SCHOOLS: 'NIL' RETURN OPTION</u>

In the case of special schools if, in the view of the school principal, all relevant pupils have a learning or physical disability which would prevent them from attempting the tests, the system now allows you to make a **<u>NIL</u>** return. In this case, **<u>please do not enter any data (including zeros)</u>** into the STen levels. Select the **<u>NIL</u>** option on the first page.

<u>IMPORTANT NOTE FOR INFANT SCHOOLS</u>

As infant schools have no pupils in second, fourth or sixth class, no return is required. If an infant school logs on to the system, the school will not be recognised by the system. If such a school is in doubt, please contact literacynumeracy1415@education.gov.ie.