

ST. PATRICK'S BOYS' NATIONAL SCHOOL

English as an Additional Language Policy



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St. Patrick's Boys' National School

Portrane Rd., Donabate, Co. Dublin

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Scoil Naomh Pádraig (Buachailli)



Principal: Brian Haran

www.stpatsbns.ie Roll No: 16267G

English as an Additional Language Policy

Introductory Statement

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to school staff on the delivery of English as an Additional Language (EAL). This policy will provide a basis of consistency and quality, while allowing for flexibility in the delivery of EAL service. The aim of our EAL policy is to ensure that pupils develop the competency to use English confidently as a means of learning across the range of curriculum areas.

This policy reflects the current guidelines as outlined in Circular 0015/2009 :Meeting the needs of pupils learning English as an Additional Language (DES), Intercultural Education in Primary School Guidelines for Schools (NCCA, 2005), Primary School Assessment Kit (DES , 2007), Toolkit for Diversity in the Primary School (2007) , Up and Away (Integrate Ireland Language and Training , 2006), Circular 138/2006: Supporting Assessment in the Primary School (DES), Circular 0052/2019: Exemption from the Study of Irish (DES).

Rationale:

Here in St. Patricks Boys National School, we acknowledge children's differing culture, backgrounds and first languages. The EAL service enables the students whose primary language or language of the home is other than English, to develop their individual potential and integrate fully in an inclusive school.

Aims and Objectives:

At St. Patricks Boys National school we are committed to the provision of appropriate teaching and resources for pupils for whom English is an additional language and for raising the achievement of all pupils.

We aim to:

- Identify children who have English language needs.
- Identify and respond to the individual needs of each EAL learner.
- Integrate the EAL learners as quickly as possible into all mainstream learning and activities of the school.
- Support EAL learners and their parents in adapting to a new culture while maintaining a connection with their own language and culture.



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Organisation of Language Support

- In general, support sessions of 30 minutes duration are allocated depending on the age and needs of the pupil/s.
- When timetabling, priority will be given to the pupils with the lowest English Language proficiency. Where two or more children have the same proficiency level, priority will be given to the older child. This is to ensure that pupils in senior classes of the school are prioritised for language support, as these pupils face greater language barriers.

"Children entering primary school at the level of Junior and Senior Infants will usually develop literacy, classroom language, vocabulary and so on at the same rate as their peers. The 'difference' between the EAL child and the English speaking peer group is small. Older children entering Senior primary classes can experience a greater challenge. They have a more developed sense of 'difference', which can create a barrier to settling down, integrating and engaging with learning" (Up and Away pg 7).

- Withdrawals will be in groups, every endeavour will be made to match children to a peer group of similar age and language proficiency.
- The language support teacher will consult with the class teacher to ensure that withdrawal sessions occur at the most appropriate time in the pupil's day.

Identification of Pupils Requiring Language Support

- An initial consultation with parents will be held to determine information such as:
 - Previous schooling and ascertain if this was sustained or interrupted.
 - Home language(s).
 - Other relevant information.
- Teacher observations and assessments will form an integral part in identifying learners with additional English language needs. These observations/ assessments may be recorded in a number of ways including, but not limited to:
 - **Initial Basic Assessment** (Up and Away pg 21) OR **Checklist for Observing Progress during Silent Period** (Up and Away pg.25)
 - **Feedback from Class Teacher** checklists (Up and Away pg 22-23)
 - The **Primary School Assessment Kit** will be used to identify pupils in need of language support.

Primary School Assessment Kit



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The purpose of the Primary language Assessment Kit is to:

- Identify pupils who no longer require additional language support having reached level B1: Threshold.
- Identify pupils who do not reach this level B1: Threshold in one or more skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing). These pupils will receive language support for the coming school year.
- Identify language proficiency of new pupils.
- To inform programme planning for each individual pupil.

The four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing are assessed. Junior and Senior infant pupils will complete the listening and speaking parts only of the assessment. Pupils progress through three levels of English Proficiency Benchmarks:

- A1 Breakthrough: Focuses on the very basic communication necessary in order to familiarise pupils with the daily routines and general environment of school and thus launch the educational process.
- A2 Waystage: Defines an intermediate level at which the pupil is able increasingly to benefit linguistically and educationally from his presence in the mainstream classroom.
- B1 Threshold: Defines the communication proficiency pupils must achieve in order to be fully integrated in the mainstream classroom.

Benchmarks will be applied with due regard for pupils age and previous educational experience (if any).

When to Test:

- EAL pupils' proficiency will be assessed using the **Primary Assessment Kit** in September each year, with the exception of pupils who are new to the school, a settling in period of one month is recommended.
- This assessment should be carried out in a one-to-one setting by the language support teacher and will take place over a number of sessions.
- Teachers will carry out informal assessments throughout the year.
- The **Primary Assessment Kit** will be used again in April/ May to assess progress throughout the year. This assessment can be used to inform end of year reports.



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Recording and Monitoring of pupils' progress

- All records or assessments containing information about pupils' will be stored securely, in line with the schools GDPR policy.
- Primary Language Assessments carried out by the language support teacher will be retained by the school on the pupils' digital file.
- **For pupils who require further language support beyond the two year period, they must have an assessment carried out using the Primary Assessment Kit to show they have not attained level B1 proficiency in all language skills. This will be retained by the school and available on the childs' digital file.**

EAL Standardised Testing

In reference to Circular 0138/2006: *"Pupils may be excluded from the test if ...in the case of newcomer pupils where their level of English is such that attempting such a test would be inappropriate."*

It is generally accepted that pupils who have not reached level **A1.3** of the Language Proficiency Benchmarks may not be tested with standardised tests.

Any decision to exempt should be taken in consultation with parents, class teacher and language support teacher, with the final decision residing with the school Principal.

Exemption from Irish

Where a pupil is deemed eligible for an exemption from the study of Irish and where the parents request this in writing and meet the criteria of the circular, the school will award this exemption in accordance with circular 0054/2022. The Principal will process this application and ensure that the required school report is created and filed. A copy of the exemption certificate will be provided to the parents (as per Circular 0054/2022).



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Programme Planning

The primary objective of the language support programme is to integrate the pupil as quickly as possible into all mainstream learning and activities of the school.

The curriculum framework for language support is based entirely on the language needs of the primary curriculum. These are specified as the "English Language Proficiency Benchmarks for Non-English Speaking Pupils at Primary Level".

They consist of thirteen Units of Work:

1. Myself
2. Our school
3. Food and clothes
4. Colours, shapes and opposites
5. People who help us
6. Weather
7. Transport and travel
8. Seasons, holidays and festivals
9. The local and wider community
10. Time
11. People and places in other areas
12. Animals and plants
13. Caring for my locality

The order in which the units of work are presented is dictated by the need to draw pupils as quickly as possible into school life.

Programmes of work will be devised collaboratively between the class teacher and language support teacher. The pupils **European Language Portfolio** will showcase the learning of the pupil.

European Language Portfolio (ELP):

The purpose of the ELP is to support children whose mother tongue is not English as they meet the challenge of learning English in order to participate fully in mainstream education. It is a recommended portfolio for use in EAL sessions, completed by the child.

The ELP is intended for pupils from first class upwards as it involves the use of basic literacy skills.

Should a pupil move school, their ELP should move with the pupil to assist further language support which may be required in the pupils' new school.



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The purpose

Roles and Responsibilities

The role of supporting learning is a collaborative responsibility shared by all the school community.

Board of Management

- Ratify the EAL policy.
- Ensure that satisfactory classroom accommodation, teaching resources and explicit language supports are provided.

The School Principal

The school principal has overall responsibility for the school's provision for children with EAL.

- In consultation with the Deputy Principal and Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) identify those children to receive language support.
- Will ensure that an appropriate language programme is devised and delivered.
- Consult with parents of new EAL pupils to ascertain information such as previous schooling, home languages etc.
- Allocate a class to new EAL pupils with due consideration to age and formal school start age in heritage country.
- Will maintain copies of Language Proficiency Benchmarks of all pupils in receipt of language support.
- Will maintain copies of The Primary Language Assessment Kit proficiency levels of pupils required further language support beyond the standard two years.

The EAL Coordinator

- To implement DES language support guidelines.
- To coordinate the assessment of children requiring language support.
- To support both language support teachers and the school SENCO in using the Primary Language Assessment Kit effectively and correctly.
- To support both language support teachers and class teachers to devise an appropriate language programme



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- To maintain a list of pupils who are receiving language support and their language proficiency in each language skill.
- To develop and review school policy in relation to EAL.
- To assist the Principal with liaising with parents, staff and other professionals relating to EAL and language support.
- In consultation with school stakeholders, create a culturally diverse school environment, ensuring all heritage cultures are represented, respected and celebrated.

The Class Teacher

- Has overall responsibility for the progress of each pupil in his/her class and maintains records tracking this.
- Both the language support teacher and mainstream class teacher will work in collaboration to set relevant and achievable learning targets for each pupil.
- Assess the pupils language proficiency using a variety of formal and informal assessments.
- Provide support and interventions to each pupil.
- Keep the language support teacher informed about how the pupil is reacting in class, coping with classroom language, interaction, etc. Then these matters can also be addressed in language support sessions.
- Research the child's heritage culture in order to become culturally aware and ensure respect and dignity of the child is maintained.
- Creates a culturally diverse classroom environment, ensuring all heritage cultures are represented, respected and celebrated.

The Language Support Teacher

The primary role of the language support teacher is to promote the pupil's development of English language proficiency so that he can gradually gain access to the curriculum. The pupil remains the responsibility of the mainstream class teacher who will work closely with the language support teacher.

The duties of the language support teacher, in consultation with the class teacher, SENCO and the Principal, are to:

- Request consent from parents / guardians to proceed with assessments and withdrawal.



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- Assess the pupils proficiency in English using both formal and informal assessments and maintain records of the outcomes of these assessments.
- Research language supports available to best suit the learner.
- Give brief progress information or follow-up tasks to the class teacher in a timely manner.
- Schedule and timetable the programme each term to ensure the maximum benefit to all pupils, including pairing or grouping pupils with similar learning needs, based on their language proficiency and age.
- Devise and deliver an appropriate language programme.
- Create and file appropriate School Support Plans/GLP.
- Maintain and file a weekly planning/progress record or equivalent for each individual group of pupils in receipt of language support.
- Research the child's heritage culture in order to become culturally aware and ensure respect and dignity of the child is maintained.
- Prepare the pupil, on an on-going basis, to access mainstream learning, initially in part and later on more fully.
- Help the pupil to develop appropriate strategies and skills to support future formal education in general.

Parents/ Guardians

The central role of parents/guardians is to support the work of the school and to optimise teaching and learning opportunities for their child at home. This may be challenging for parents/ guardians who are not fluent in English. Therefore:

- Ask the child about what they are learning in school. This will help the parents/guardians learn the key phrases and words related to their child's language learning.
- Use their child's ELP as a home-school communication tool.
- Continue to speak to their children in their first tongue so that the pupil maintains a connection with their heritage culture and language. Interaction in the pupils first language is needed in order for the pupil to develop cognitively.

Communication with parents

- Parent Teacher Meetings are held in November for Senior Infants to 6th Class and in February for Junior Infants.
- Visual feedback sheets (Up and Away pg. 30) may be used for parents/ guardians who do not have sufficient English language proficiency yet.



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- An end-of-year report goes home in June each year. A copy of these reports will be sent in both English and the families first language. Opportunities to discuss this report are made available before the end of term.
- Additional time may be needed for meeting parents for whom english is not their first language, this is to accommodate communication difficulties which may arise.
- Consideration should be given at all times, to the heritage culture of the parents/ guardians and how best to communicate in a manner which is culturally respectful.
- Translation Applications, such as Microsoft translator, Say Hi and Google Translate may be used where appropriate.

Success Criteria

- Progress of EAL pupils' social skills and integration into St. Patricks' Boys National School.
- Progress of EAL pupils in accessing the curriculum.
- Reaching proficiency benchmark B1; threshold in listening, speaking, reading, writing (Primary Assessment Kit).

This Policy was reviewed by the Board of Management, Teaching Staff and Parent Body.

This Policy was ratified on:-

This Policy will be reviewed again in the school year: as necessary.

Mary Brooks, Chairperson, Board of Management

Brian Horan, Príomhoide