

Cloghroe N.S. Policy on Exemption from Irish

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Introduction:

This policy was drafted by staff and Board of Management (BOM) in response to ongoing changes in special educational provisions and the publication of Circular 0052/2019.

Rationale:

Circular 0054/2022 from the Department of Education and Science is the directing circular, under which a Board of Management decides who, may or may not, receive an exemption from Irish. This circular supersedes Circular 12/96 and the 2009 revision of that Circular, as well as Circular 0052/2019, all of which have been withdrawn. Existing exemptions from the study of Irish granted under aforementioned previous circulars and held by pupils will continue to apply until the end of their post-primary education.

Relationship to the school Ethos:

This policy is in keeping with the mission statement of the school, which strives to enhance the self-esteem of all through providing for the intellectual, physical, moral and cultural needs of all.

Aims and Objectives:

To allow for pupils of differing abilities, interests and circumstances

To enhance inclusivity within the school

To enable children of all abilities to access the curriculum in a learner friendly manner

Policy Content:

As per Circular 54/2022 (Section 2.2), exemption from the study of Irish may be allowed in the following exceptional circumstances only:

- i. A pupil moving from a different country without previous experience of learning the Irish language:

An exemption from the study of Irish may be granted to a pupil whose education was received outside the State (for a minimum period of three consecutive years) where he/she did not have opportunity to engage in the study of Irish

AND either (a) or (b):

(a) who is not less than 12 years of age on the day of their enrolment⁶ or reenrolment, or

(b) who is enrolling following the completion of the full course of primary education recognised by another state.

Or

- ii. A pupil who experiences significant literacy difficulties which are an obstacle to their learning across the curriculum:

An exemption from the study of Irish may be granted to a pupil:

- who has at least reached the start of third class

AND

- who presents with significant literacy difficulties that are persistent despite having had access to a differentiated approach to language and literacy learning in all subjects/across the curriculum and over time. Documentary evidence to this effect, held by the school, should include Student Support Plans detailing:
 - regular reviews of learning needs as part of an ongoing cycle of assessment
 - target-setting
 - evidence-informed intervention and review, including test scores (Word Reading, Reading Comprehension, Spelling, other scores of language/literacy) at key points of review

AND

- who, at the time of the application for exemption presents with a standardised score on a discrete test in either Word Reading, Reading Comprehension or Spelling at/below the 10th percentile.

Note: A second assessment, e.g. WIAT III may be used to validate spelling results.

In exceptional circumstances, the school will assess children using a discrete test such as the WIAT III, in the second or third term of second class to assess whether or not a child qualifies for an exemption from Irish due to literacy difficulties.

Normally, pupils availing of an exemption under this category should be encouraged to engage with the study of oral Irish language for as long as possible in keeping with the integrated approach in the Primary Language Curriculum and acknowledging that pupils at a young age adapt and improve over time.

Or

- iii. A pupil who experiences a high level of multiple and persistent needs that are a significant barrier to the pupil's participation and engagement in their learning and school life

It is recognised that there is a small cohort of pupils who have a high level of multiple and persistent needs that are a significant barrier to their participation and engagement in their learning and school life. In the case of these pupils, consideration may need to be given to adjusting the range of learning experiences to ensure that their needs are met and that they may engage purposefully in their learning in school. In very exceptional circumstances, this means that consideration may need to be given to exempting them from the study of Irish.

An exemption from the study of Irish may be granted to a pupil:

- who has at least reached the beginning of second class
- AND
- who experiences a high level of multiple and persistent needs that are a very significant and continuing barrier to his/her participation and engagement in his/her learning and school life
- AND
- whose school has substantial written evidence that these needs persist despite targeted and individualised Student Support Plans to address those needs
- AND
- whose school has substantial written evidence that these individualised Student Support Plans have been implemented over not less than two school years, and have been monitored and reviewed by the school in collaboration with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the pupil

AND

- who has been given every reasonable opportunity to participate in the learning of Irish in mainstream classes for as long as possible in keeping with the integrated approach in the Primary Language Curriculum and acknowledging that pupils at a young age adapt and improve over time

AND

- the principal is satisfied that the granting of an exemption is in the overall best interests of the pupil concerned.

Normally, this will mean that the pupil will be expected to engage with the study of Irish at least to the end of fifth class. However, in very exceptional circumstances, where the principal is satisfied that an exemption is warranted to address the high level of multiple and persistent needs of the pupil, and certifies that all of the conditions above have been met, it may be granted at an earlier stage, but in no case may this be earlier than second class.

Or

- iv. A pupil in a recognised special school or class or who was previously enrolled in a recognised special school or class or who has a recommendation⁸ and has been deemed eligible⁹ for a place in a recognised special school and/or in a special class in a mainstream school

- Where a pupil is currently enrolled in a recognised special school or special class in a mainstream school or who has previously been enrolled in a recognised special school or special class in a mainstream school and who is transitioning to mainstream provision, that pupil is automatically entitled to an exemption from the study of Irish without an application.

Or,

- Where a pupil has a recommendation and has been deemed eligible for a place in a recognised special school and/or in a special class in a mainstream school an application for an exemption from the study of Irish will be required.

Normally, pupils availing of an exemption under category iv should be encouraged to engage with the study of oral Irish language for as long as possible in keeping with the integrated approach in the Primary Language Curriculum and acknowledging that pupils at a young age adapt and improve over time.

v. A pupil whose parent(s)/guardian(s) is a/are diplomatic or consular representative(s) of another country to Ireland irrespective of age or educational history

An exemption from the study of Irish may be granted to a pupil whose parent(s)/guardian(s) is a/are diplomatic or consular representative(s) of another country to Ireland irrespective of age or educational history.

Procedures for granting an exemption from the study of Irish:

Following a discussion with the school, a parent/guardian must make an application in writing to the principal of the school, if they wish to apply for a Certificate of Exemption from the study of Irish on behalf of a pupil.

The outcome of the application process will be conveyed by the school principal in writing to the parent(s)/guardian(s).

Where an exemption is granted, a Certificate of Exemption, signed and dated by the school principal will be issued.

Parents/guardians and pupils have the option not to exercise the exemption granted, without any loss of the right to exercise it at a future time.

It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) to ensure that a copy of the pupil's Certificate of Exemption is made available to the receiving school.

Accommodations for children with an exemption from the study of Irish:

- Children with an exemption will not do Irish homework.
- Where possible, children are asked to take part in oral activities during Irish class. Therefore, children should not be withdrawn for support five days a week during Irish class.
- In-class independent activities can be set for the child to complete during periods of the Irish lesson when the child is not engaging with the lesson e.g. during scríbhneoireacht. Where possible, such activities should be tailored to meet the individual needs of the child.
- Class teacher and Special Education Teacher will decide which programmes to use e.g. Lifeboat, SNIP, typing skills, Comprehension Box, independent reading at the child's level.
- If child attends SET for support, the independent work can be set and monitored/corrected by SET as part of the support class.
- If child does not attend SET for support, work will be set and monitored/corrected by an SET in the school once or twice a week (where possible this will be the SET working at the particular level). Children from different levels can be grouped together, where similar in-class work is being set.
- Support will be allocated to children, as per our school's SEN policy where children with the greatest needs receive the greatest support. Therefore, only children who qualify for support will receive additional support, regardless of an exemption from Irish.

Appeal Process:

Where the application for exemption from the study of Irish is refused, a parent/guardian can appeal the school's decision to the Irish Exemptions Appeal

Committee (IEAC). The deliberations of the IEAC will focus solely on the process the school engaged in reaching its decision. The IEAC will consider how the school followed the process as prescribed in Circular 0054/2022 and the accompanying Guidelines for Primary Schools.

An appeal must be lodged within 30 calendar days from the date the decision of the school not to grant an exemption was notified in writing to the parent(s)/guardian(s). The Irish Exemptions Appeal Form and Guidelines for Primary Schools can be accessed at www.education.ie/en/Parents/Information/Irish-Exemption/

Roles and Responsibilities:

In-school Management, class teachers and the Board of Management will contribute to the implementation of school procedures.

Success Criteria:

Seamless integration of non-nationals and pupils with learning difficulties


Happy school learning environment

Positive teacher/parental feedback

Review: This policy will be reviewed in line with any change of circular by the D.E.S.

Signed: 
Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 01/02/23

Signed: 
Principal
Date: 01/02/23