English as an Additional Language policy

I-Introduction

This policy responds to the need for a systematic approach to the different challenges of welcoming EAL students through the creation of an EAL department. The EAL department is therefore responsible for teaching all programs that relate to English as an Additional Language including supporting students in sitting exams in their own primary language if possible. The EAL classes are designed to meet the students' linguistic and cultural needs and prepare each student for life in Ireland and further education. EAL class provision is developed based on students' needs and can include:

- EAL lessons that focus on developing reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills in English

- EAL lessons that focus on academic vocabulary.

- Lessons on Irish culture, history, political and educational system.

- EAL lessons that prepare the student to excel in external EAL examinations. in the case of students unable to sit JC and/or LC examinations.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the school's approach to identifying and meeting the needs of students who are classified as having English as an additional language and to help ensure that Scoil Phobail Bhéara[1] meets the full range of needs of those children who are learning English as an additional language.

1. Rationale

In Ireland, the curriculum is almost entirely delivered and assessed through the medium of English language. Therefore, language development must form a key component of a school's curriculum, so that all pupils can both access the curriculum and successfully demonstrate what they have learnt. Successful learning should therefore translate into every pupil's ability to articulate their knowledge and understanding appropriately, and the curriculum must take account of this fundamental need. This is particularly important for EAL students, as they are developing their competency in English and are therefore less likely to perform to their full potential.

Language competency and the knowledge of the Irish culture are also key to successful integration of students within the school and wider community. Therefore, the school established an EAL department to cater for these linguistic and cultural needs and organise suitable day to day support for students arriving in the school.

2. Definition:

In defining EAL we have adopted the following definition: 'An EAL student is a student whose first language is not English. It does not refer to the stage of English

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[1] Referred to as SPB in this document.

these students may be at. Many EAL students speak English on a par to native speakers. The title of EAL encompasses students who are fully bilingual and all those at different stages of learning English.' EAL students may be:

- Newly arrived from a foreign country and school.
- Newly arrived from a foreign country, but an English-speaking school.
- Born abroad, but moved to Ireland at some point before starting school or
- Born in Ireland, but in a family where the main language is not English.

3. Aims

The EAL department will endeavour to ensure that all EAL students at Scoil Phobail Bhéara, have full access to the curriculum in order to do justice to their academic ability in examinations. They should be able to understand lessons, revise and convey on paper or in oral tests the information they have learnt; express ideas and opinions without detrimental limitation of language or vocabulary; and deduce, apply and analyse within their intellectual capabilities. The EAL department will support and develop students' appreciation and knowledge of the English language and Irish Culture, manners and behaviour while maintaining their indebtedness to their own language and culture. Their task is to:

- Provide personalised programmes for all EAL pupils to enable them to access mainstream subjects and successfully integrate with other students and participate in activities, so that they may play a full part in the life of the SPB community.
- Provide a learning environment or a safe space where students feel confident in expressing themselves in English so that each EAL student can communicate any personal, social, or academic problems to others effectively and with confidence and fully understand all rules and safety procedures.
- Enable students to reach their full potential and participate fully in all subjects through the use of English so that by the time university applications are reached, students can express themselves with confidence, accuracy and maturity.

- Raise the level of EAL-informed teaching in mainstream classes, by offering workshops/in-house training to teachers.
- Encourage EAL Senior level students to study their first language for the Leaving Certificate Examination and support them by providing information and guidance.

II- EAL program

The EAL department strives to identify a student's needs at the earliest opportunity, recognising the skills they bring to the school and ensuring equality of access to the whole curriculum. This help is a mixture of academic and pastoral and extends to all areas of school life, as these students are learning not only a second language but also how to adapt and thrive in a new culture.

1. Initial Assessment

All new entrants who have indicated a language other than English being spoken at home, or that English is a second language on their enrolment or if their principal language of communication is not English, should expect to be assessed by the EAL department on entry, in order to determine their level of English proficiency for appropriate placement and grouping. The EAL assessment Kit created by the NCCA will be used for the purpose of formal assessment. Some internet tools can be used for informal assessment prior to formal assessment.

All formal assessment results will be expressed with reference to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages[2] (A1, A2, B1, B2 etc)

The EAL department should also collect and record the following additional information:

• Country of origin
• Date of arrival in Ireland
• Pupil's first language

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[2] See Appendix 1: The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

• Other languages spoken at home by pupil

• Pupil's level of literacy in other languages

 • Links with pupils already in school

• Pupil's educational background

A register of EAL pupils' profile is maintained and monitored by the EAL department. Students who are later identified as needing support or whom it is felt would potentially benefit from it can be referred to the EAL department (see: referral procedure).

 If academic reports indicate a level of proficiency sufficient to learn well in a classroom situation (level B1.3) then no assessment is required. In the case of students joining the school who are coming from a country in which the spoken language is not English, the EAL coordinator will liaise with the class teacher/year head/AEN department to conduct an assessment. If EAL support is needed, parents will be contacted to discuss arrangements.

2. Ongoing Monitoring and Progress Tracking

As well as the initial assessment, all EAL learners will complete a summative assessment at the end of each year. At this point, a decision is made whether the student's EAL provision should be reduced, increased, or discontinued. All EAL entrants into first year are assessed at the start of the year on their level of general proficiency (report from primary school, informal assessment, NCCA assessment). Progress tracking for pupils takes place on a termly basis (mainstream school-based exams) and, or any informally monitored progress done during the term by the EAL coordinator. The NCCA assessment kit will be used to check their progress against the CEFR.

If staff and teaching hours are unavailable to meet the request for EAL then recommendations will be made to the parents for EAL provision outside of school. Language teachers, preferably with specialist EAL qualifications, teach all EAL lessons.

At the same time, the aim of the EAL department is also to support pupils in their other subjects as much as possible (through the use of word banks and worksheets passed on by other subject teachers, for example) and to further develop pupils' general and academic language skills in areas which will be useful for all aspects of study and personal social development. In relation to academic subject support, the extent of EAL teacher involvement will depend on the requests of teachers and resources supplied by subject teachers, as well as the amount of time that can be given to subject support because of time limitations.

Referral Procedure

 • Contact the Year head who will arrange an EAL assessment from the EAL coordinator.
• Following assessment, the EAL coordinator, relevant EAL teaching staff and the mainstream teacher will discuss whether the student's level is due to language-related difficulties or if other factors, such as AEN or attitude, are also having an effect.
 • Based on this discussion (and assessments), the pupil would be either offered EAL support and/or AEN support, if available.
 • Parents will be informed of the provision to be offered by the Year head and/or the EAL coordinator.

Exit Procedure

Once a student has reached the expected B1 exit level a discussion is held between EAL and year head to confirm that the pupil is adequately accessing the curriculum. The student is then no longer scheduled for EAL instruction but will remain in the system as an EAL student and can still benefit from EAL support if needed, including support in the study of their first language for the Leaving Certificate.

3. Provision

 EAL provision will come under the umbrella of AEN. While falling under the category of 'learning support", EAL functions separately to AEN. This EAL provision encompasses curriculum planning, support for individual pupils or groups of pupils

within the classroom in terms of differentiation, support for those responsible for teaching these students, and supplementary provision.

Once an EAL student has been assessed and her/his needs identified, an individual EAL plan in drawn up to target the area or areas in which the student needs to improve. If an EAL student in 3rd year is expected to have linguistic difficulty in completing the English Junior Certificate, the EAL department can offer to register the student to sit an English as an additional language examination to recognise the student's level of English (ex: IELTS[3]).

III-Roles & Responsibilities

1. Role of EAL coordinator

The EAL coordinator develops and leads the delivery of EAL provision at Scoil Phobail Bhéara and works closely with other .teaching staff and management to identify any student who may require additional support and provides an appropriate programme for individual EAL students.

Pastoral Responsibilities

- Meet with students and/or their families regarding a possible support programme.
- Meet with EAL students on a regular basis to support both progress and integration.
- Liaise with class teachers/year heads on issues of planning, assessment, and teaching strategies regarding EAL students.

Curriculum Responsibilities

- Provides EAL targets in line with the European framework in the development of language skills .
- Organises for external English language examinations if relevant.
- Provide reports to parents about students' progress. Reports should include appropriate target setting.

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[3] International English Language Testing System.

- Monitor EAL provision in the school and develop or collate appropriate material for EAL students.

- Responsible for ensuring that comprehensive data on EAL students is collected, maintained, and updated.

- The EAL coordinator will discuss with the English department, class teacher/year head individual students' suitability to sit appropriate JC/LC/external EAL examinations.

- Support staff, where necessary, in the teaching of EAL pupils and will be able to direct teachers to appropriate resources, assistive technology and tools.

- Develop or publicise CPD opportunities for EAL teachers and teaching staff and provide whole-school training.

- Ensure that the school fulfils the inspection requirements for EAL provision.

- Provides students with information in relation to the LC exam for their primary language.

2. Role of EAL Teachers

The EAL teacher brings particular expertise to the mainstream classroom. This will include an awareness of the role of language in learning, experience of the language development of students, and knowledge of the students in the classroom. Effective classroom practice will draw on the skills of both teachers and there will be flexibility. The main knowledge and skills of an EAL teacher can be seen in the following categories:

• Second language teaching – subject knowledge.
• Classroom practice.
• Assessment and recording of EAL students' progress.
• Equality of opportunity.

An EAL teacher will support students in the following ways:
• Assess and adapt the language demands of the task or unit of work.
• Considering EAL plans and targets when planning lessons so that they can focus on areas of need and provide specific support.

3. Role of Subject Teachers

- Subject Teacher will apply differentiation in order to adjust to EAL students' level of English proficiency.
- Teachers will be supported with strategies to support English language development and inform the EAL department if additional support is needed.
- Teachers will review tasks and pupils' progress with the EAL Teacher and monitor these arrangements at regular intervals .

4. EAL & AEN

EAL pupils are not children with AEN[4] and SPB recognises that most EAL pupils needing support with their English do not have AEN, but have skills and knowledge about similar to monolingual English-speaking children. Their ability to participate in the full curriculum may be in advance of their communicative skills in English. If a student does not make sufficient progress on the EAL programme, then it is possible that the student's difficulties are not solely due to language and may have AEN. EAL Teachers will aim to identify AEN students within the first term of a student joining the EAL programme. If an EAL Teacher believes a student will has AEN issues they will discuss it with the class teacher and the AEN department. There may be instances where a pupil has both EAL and AEN issues. EAL pupils with a special educational need will be identified as part of normal assessment procedures as outlined in the AEN Policy. Parents will be advised of the decision reached.

EAL will work with AEN in relation to the allocation of EAL hours as these hours are generated from Department of Education AEN allocation of hours. The same will be done in relation to access to assistive technology (tablet, laptop etc).

Scoil Phobaìl Bhéara will monitor, evaluate and review this policy and all related work and procedures on an ongoing basis to ensure compliance with best practice.

Policy Written: October 2022

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[d] Additional Educational Needs.

APPENDIX 1: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

Global Scale

Proficient User	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
Independent User	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic User	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

Source: Council of Europe Website: coe.int/en