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An Gleann,
Co. Luimnigh.

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English as an Additional Language (E.A.L) Policy

St. Fergus' NS (20102T)

May 2025

Introductory Statement

This policy will assist teachers in our school in meeting the language and learning needs of the child for whom English is an additional language, so that s/he can access all areas of the Primary School Curriculum.

This policy was devised following a consultative process with all interested parties and is guided by the relevant legislation and guidance, such as;

- The Irish Constitution

Article 42 - Education

Section 4

"The State shall provide for free primary education and shall endeavour to supplement and give reasonable aid to private and corporate educational initiative, and, when the public good requires it, provide other educational facilities or institutions with due regard, however, for the rights of parents, especially in the matter of religious and moral formation."

Article 40.1 - Equality before the law

"All citizens shall, as human persons, be held equal before the law. This shall not be held to mean that the State shall not in its enactments have due regard to differences of capacity, physical and moral, and of social function."

- The Education Act, 1998
- The Equal Status Acts 2000–2018
- The Education (Admission to Schools) Act, 2018
- The Refugee Act, 1996 (Amended 2017)
- The Intercultural Education Strategy, 2010–2015
- The European Union (Reception Conditions) Regulations, 2018
- DES Circular 0015/2009
- Primary School Assessment Kit, DES 2007
- The Toolkit for Diversity in the Primary School, 2007
- Intercultural Education in the Primary School, Guidelines for schools, NCCA 2005 and
- Up and Away IILT 2006
- SET Guidelines and supporting documentation

<https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/Guidelines-for-primary-schools.pdf>

Rationale

In St. Fergus' NS, we acknowledge children's differing culture, backgrounds and language.

We strive to foster and create an inclusive school environment which reflects and affirms the linguistic, ethnic and cultural diversity of the pupils and the Catholic ethos of St. Fergus NS.

The EAL service enables the students whose primary language or language of the home is other than English, to develop their individual potential, both socially and academically, within the school system

Aims

We aspire to achieve the following through this policy:

- To enable students of ethnic minorities to have a sense of belonging in our School and in the Community of Glin and Ireland.
- To allow EAL students to engage socially in a full and meaningful way with their peers. This will help students to develop meaningful friendships and connections both in their school environment and local community.
- To provide a framework for supplementary teaching and additional support and resources for those students for whom English is an additional language.
- To promote EAL students' development of English Language proficiency so that they can gradually gain access to the curriculum.
- To maximise the progress, academic attainment and personal achievement of EAL students.
- To promote a recognition of and respect for ethnic and cultural diversity in the school thus ensuring that EAL students feel valued and affirmed.
- To promote effective home school links and increase parental involvement among parents of EAL students.

Role and Responsibilities

Role of the Principal

- To oversee the development, implementation and review of the provision of language support in the school.

Role of S.E.N.C.O./EAL Co-ordinator

- Assume overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the school's language support policy.
- Monitor the implementation of the school plan on an ongoing basis.
- Assume direct responsibility for coordinating language support and special needs services where appropriate to a particular student.

Role of the Class Teacher

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all students in his/her class including those in receipt of language support. In supporting the development and implementation of the school plan on language support the class teacher should:

- Share their planning with the language support teacher to identify the language needs of the individual students.
- Differentiate the classroom programmes for the EAL student in keeping with the agreed targets and activities.
- Modify presentation and questioning techniques to maximise the involvement of students with English as a second language.
- Place emphasis on oral language development across the curriculum.

- Set learning targets at an appropriate level.
- Ensure a high level of consultation and co-operation with the language support teacher.

Role of the Language Support Teacher

In collaboration with parents and the mainstream class teacher, the language support teacher will:

- Identify pupils requiring additional language support.
- To liaise regularly with the class teacher to discuss the child's particular needs
- Assess the pupils' proficiency in English using the assessments tasks from the Up and Away programme and supplementary teacher-designed tasks/assessments.
- Devise an appropriate language programme (either in –class or withdrawal).
- Deliver the language programme.
- Record and monitor the pupil's progress.

Liaising with Parents

Effective communication and partnership with parents is essential to the success of a language support programme and to ensuring positive educational outcomes for pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL). At St. Fergus' NS, we recognise that parents are the child's first and most important educators, and we are committed to working in partnership with families to support their child's language learning journey.

In line with the Intercultural Education Strategy (2010–2015) and Circular 0015/2009, we will:

Be accessible to parents in a supportive, respectful, and inclusive manner, acknowledging and celebrating the linguistic and cultural diversity of our school community.

Ensure clear, accessible communication using plain English, translated materials (where feasible), and visual supports to share important information with parents.

Provide interpreting or bilingual supports when required, in accordance with Department of Education guidance.

Meet with parents at formal Parent-Teacher Meetings, as well as offering additional opportunities to meet individually with the EAL support teacher and/or class teacher to discuss progress and supports.

(See Appendix D)

Share language targets and progress in a parent-friendly way, using simple checklists, examples of pupil work, or visuals to support understanding.

Offer guidance and tips for language-rich home environments, such as:

- ◆ Reading aloud in any language the family uses at home
- ◆ Encouraging everyday conversations about school, play, and routines
- ◆ Watching age-appropriate English-language TV shows with subtitles
- ◆ Accessing local library supports and story times
- ◆ Using multilingual and English learning apps or websites (e.g. Duolingo, Google Translate)

We will also:

-Encourage parental involvement in whole-school activities such as multicultural days, reading weeks, or classroom visits to share stories or cultural traditions, reinforcing a sense of belonging and community.

-Signpost families to useful external resources, including:

The NCCA's Toolkit for Diversity in the Primary School

Oide (formerly PDST) resources for EAL

Local Family Resource Centres or Libraries offering support

We are committed to fostering positive relationships and mutual trust with all parents and guardians and ensuring that EAL families are included and empowered to participate fully in school life.

Assessment of Pupil's Needs:

With regard to the identification of children with EAL needs:

1. As part of the registration and enrolment process in St. Fergus' NS parents/guardians will complete a form informing the school of the language of the home. An identification of the dominant or frequent use of another language other than English means that this child will be identified as having EAL needs.
2. The class teacher will, over the first month of the EAL pupil's term pay particular attention to the child - to make a formal and informal assessment of the child's English language capabilities and competencies.
3. The language support teacher will administer a selection of assessment from the Up and Away programme and teacher-designed tasks to ascertain the pupil's level of proficiency using the English language.

Programme Planning:

1. Identifying EAL learners.
2. Aiding the 'settling down' period.
3. Collaboration between class teacher and Support/EAL teacher.
4. Initial assessment (Up and Away programme).
5. Devising a specific language programme for individual pupils/groups.
6. Delivering language programme.
7. End of year assessment/progress assessment (Primary School Assessment Kit)

Playful and Engaging Approaches to EAL Teaching

In line with the Primary Curriculum Framework, St. Fergus' NS recognises the importance of providing play-based and engaging learning experiences to support the development of English as an additional language.

For many EAL learners, particularly in the early years, play provides a natural and meaningful context for language acquisition. It allows pupils to interact with peers, explore new vocabulary, practise listening and speaking skills, and build confidence in using English in authentic social and academic contexts.

We promote the following playful and interactive strategies in both mainstream and support settings:

- ✓ Play-based learning: Integrating language objectives into structured play sessions in all classes
- ✓ Role-play and drama activities: Enabling children to practise functional language through shopping, cooking, and real-life scenarios.
- ✓ Storytelling and picture books: Encouraging listening comprehension and oral retelling through visual and narrative scaffolds.
- ✓ Songs, rhymes, and chants: Supporting vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, rhythm, and memory.
- ✓ Interactive games: Including board games, matching cards, language dice, and digital learning tools (e.g., apps and online games) to reinforce vocabulary and sentence structure.
- ✓ Use of puppets and visual prompts: To model conversations and lower the affective filter, helping children feel safe to communicate.
- ✓ Cooperative group activities: Paired and small-group tasks where language emerges naturally in shared problem-solving and play.

Role of Teachers:

- ✧ Teachers are encouraged to embed these playful practices into both **mainstream and support class settings.
- ✧ EAL support teachers will tailor activities to individual language levels and can draw on resources from Up and Away, NCCA EAL Toolkit and Oide Literacy Resources.
- ✧ Teachers should use visual, tactile and interactive materials to create a language-rich, inclusive environment.

This approach not only supports oral language development but also fosters wellbeing, confidence, and social inclusion, aligning with the school's commitment to inclusive, child-centred education.

Recording and Monitoring of Pupils Progress:

The language support teacher will record and monitor pupils progress by:

- Initial assessment (Up and away programme, Aistear programme and teacher designed tasks) (Appendix A)
- Teacher observations (Appendix B)
- Teacher questioning
- Pupils work samples
- Meeting with class teacher to discuss progress both in the language support class and in the mainstream class. (Appendix C)
- End of year assessment/ progress assessment (Primary School Assessment Kit and/or Aistear checklists (Appendix D)

Resources:

- Up and Away programme by IILT
- Primary School Assessment Kit by the Department of Education and Skills
- Pupil progress record sheet

This list is not prescriptive or exhaustive and teachers may use additional resources for the planning and delivery of this programme.

Other Useful Procedures and Practices

The following procedures and practices might be of assistance to children who are learning English as an additional language:

- Establishing buddy support systems that enable the child to rely on support from another member of the child's class
- Facilitating access to the school or classroom library so that the child is encouraged to read as much as possible
- Involving parents from a variety of linguistic communities in the school as much as possible within the life of the school

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed as part of the Additional Support Policy.

Ratification

This policy has been discussed and ratified at a Board of Management meeting on 27th May 2025

Signed: _____
CHAIRPERSON BOM

Date: _____

Reference Section

- Irish Curriculum <https://www.curriculumonline.ie/>
- Primary Language Curriculum Framework <https://www.curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/84747851-0581-431b-b4d7-dc6ee850883e/2023-Primary-Framework-ENG-screen.pdf>
- Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework, NCCA, 2009 <https://ncca.ie/en/resources/aistear-the-early-childhood-curriculum-framework/>
- Circular 15/2009 Meeting the needs of pupils learning English as an Additional Language, DES <https://www.ippn.ie/index.php/resources/des-circulars/2000-2010/2009/2449-00152009-meeting-the-needs-of-pupils-learning-english-as-an-additional-language-eal>
- Intercultural Education in the Primary School, Guidelines for schools, NCCA, 2005
- Primary School Assessment Kit, DES, 2007 <https://ncca.ie/media/2172/primary-school-assessment-kit.pdf>
- Toolkit for Diversity in the Primary School, 2007
- Up and Away, IILT, 2006 https://ncca.ie/en/resources/up_and_away/
- Intercultural Guidelines for Schools, INTO
- Circular 138/2006 Supporting Assessment in the Primary School, DES
- Educational Provision for Children from Ukraine, International Protection Applicants and Children with Recognised Status Guidance for Primary Schools September 2023
- Considerations and Advice to Support the Placement of Children and Young People in Classes and Year Groups in Primary and Post-Primary Schools
- EAL Resource List from NCCA
- Scoilnet – Primary Classroom Supports
- Oide – Primary Literacy -EAL_ SET Guidelines and supporting documentation <https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/Guidelines-for-primary-schools.pdf>

Initial interview assessment for new pupils

✓ appropriate box as interview proceeds
 * response may not be accurate but indicates a reasonable level of comprehension

		No response	Some comprehension but unsure response	Response indicating comprehension*
1	What is your name?			
2	What is your age?			
3	What language do you speak at home?			
4	Where do you live?			
5	Have you got brothers and sisters?			
6	What games do you like to play?			
Only proceed to 7 if the pupil has answered some or all of questions 1-6				
7	How did you come to school today?			
8	Did you go to school in another place? (if applicable)			
9	Tell me about your last school.			
10	What was your best subject?			
11	What did you not like in school?			
12	What will you do today after school?			
13	What would you like to be when you finish school?			

APPENDIX B

Checklist for observing progress during the Silent Period

Name of pupil: _____ Age: _____

The pupil is:

(Write the date of observation in the relevant column)

	NOT AT ALL	OCCASIONALLY	REGULARLY
Using his/her mother tongue with teacher/peers despite their inability to understand.			
Making eye contact with the teacher.			
Watching other pupils closely.			
Imitating other pupils' actions.			
Using facial expressions to communicate feelings.			
Bringing particular objects, books, etc. to teacher.			
Responding to communication through gesture/mime by teacher or other pupils.			
Attention-seeking by interacting with other pupils or teacher (e.g. handing them objects).			
Requesting help by making signs, pointing, etc.			
Indicating dislike of an object or activity.			
Protesting by making sounds or appearing aggressive.			
Imitating non-verbal behaviour of other pupils.			
Experimenting with sounds of English.			
Repeating and rehearsing words or phrases.			
Following verbal instructions.			

APPENDIX C

First feedback from class teacher shortly after arrival of new language support pupil

Name of teacher: _____

Class: _____

Name of pupil: _____

Date: _____

	YES	NO	SOMETIMES
Is there evidence of this pupil mixing with other pupils?			
Has this pupil volunteered information in class?			
Has this pupil asked for clarification or help in class?			
Can you see evidence of this pupil making progress in general?			
Can you provide any insights into what this pupil already knows in different subjects?			
What subject areas does this pupil seem most comfortable with?			
What subject areas are creating the most difficulty for this pupil?			
Please indicate any particular areas that would benefit from language support in the next 6-8 weeks. If appropriate, name of textbook and chapter would be helpful.			

The answers to the questions in this form will help the language support teacher to identify on-going areas of priority for this pupil. This information would be useful at intervals throughout the school year.

It is **not necessary** to complete the form as the information may easily be exchanged informally. The form is merely to provide guidance.

Parent-Teacher Meeting Report

Name of teacher: _____

Class: _____

Name of pupil: _____

Date: _____

Punctuality and attendance:



Time school starts:



Interaction with other pupils:



Interaction/answering in classroom activities:



Reading:



Writing:



Speaking:



Listening:



Mathematics
(colours, shapes and opposites):



Physical education:



Geography
(local and wider community):



Science (nature study):



Information technology:



Art:



Music:



Homework:

