

Scoil Cholmáin, Corkbeg, Whitegate, Co. Cork

Roll Number – 119921

Tel: (021) 4661622

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EAL Policy (English as a Foreign Language)

Introductory Statement

Background:

This policy was first drafted in the 2022-2023 school year. Traditionally, Whitegate NS, did not have an EAL Post or a cohort of EAL pupils and this policy was first formulated in response to our new enrolments, who arrived to us from April/ May 2022 onwards. Following a year of the integration of our EAL pupils and the delivery of education from an ESL nature, our policy was revised and formally ratified by the BOM in June 2023.

This policy is guided by the relevant Department of Education & Science publications and circulars. (DES Circulars 07/2012, 0056/2011 & 0015/2009, Primary School Assessment Kit-DES 2007, 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). It is also informed by the Ukrainian/wellbeing documents issued from NEPS and the DES around the integration of EAL pupils in the 2022/2023 years.

Introduction

Whitegate NS is committed to making appropriate provision of teaching and resources for students for whom English is an Additional Language. We aim to identify individual students' needs, recognise the skills they bring to school and ensure a quality of access to the curriculum.

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to school staff on the delivery of English as an additional language and also on how best to accommodate and fully include EAL students.

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

In keeping with the inclusive ethos of Whitegate NS, this EAL policy wishes to recognise, affirm and in so far as possible, assist all pupils to integrate meaningfully into Whitegate NS.

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Aims

- We aspire to achieve the following by through this policy:
- To enable students of ethnic minorities to have a sense of belonging.
- To provide a framework for supplementary teaching and additional support.
- To provide 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.

Organisation of EAL Language Support

“Schools now have the autonomy on how to deploy resources between language support and learning support depending on their specific needs”. (Circular 07/2012).

1. Decisions regarding language teaching for EAL students will be made on a yearly basis with due regard being given to the needs of EAL students and the availability of time.
2. In allocating support time particular attention will be paid to older students who may have little or no English. Support may take the form of in-class or withdrawal, whichever is deemed most beneficial.
3. All teachers with responsibility for EAL students will endeavour to promote the English language proficiency.
4. Teachers of EAL students will encourage EAL students to speak English while in school, be aware of the language demands of the Curriculum, including subject

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specific vocabulary in subjects such as Maths, Geography, History & Science differentiate planning and teaching to take into account the

5. Learning needs of EAL students provide opportunities to engage in pair/group work with English speaking peers who will provide useful role models where necessary support understanding through the use of gestures and visual clues etc.,
6. We will aim to use concrete materials to promote the understanding of mathematical concepts and be aware of the need to constantly reinforce the language of Mathematics.
7. Priority will be given to speaking clearly and at a steady pace to ensure that EAL students can follow directions.
8. Material being taught, will utilise repetition and we will provide constructive and affirmative feedback for students' work.

Irish Exemptions

- *“There is no evidence that younger students have any problem with learning Irish with their peer group”, (Up and Away pg 9).*
- The normal criteria for Irish exemptions apply to EAL students. According to the Department of Education and Skills, students aged 11 years or over coming to Ireland whose education was received outside Ireland are entitled to an exemption in Irish.

Standardised Testing

- In general EAL students are expected to sit the yearly standardized tests. However with reference to Circular 0056/2011 “Students may be excluded from standardized testing if in the view of the school principal they have a learning or physical disability which would prevent them from attempting the tests or, in the case of migrant students, where the level of English required in the test would make attempting the test inappropriate”
- The Education Act 1998 which entitles each student to some form of assessment, those who are unable to participate in standardized testing at their class level may avail of testing at lower levels. It is generally accepted that students who have not reached level A1.3 (see PSAK guidelines) of the language proficiency benchmarks need not be tested with standardized test.

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- Standardised testing for EAL students is at the Principal's teacher's discretion, but accommodations can be used to give a general indication for information purposes but pupils will be marked exempt for reporting of standardised results purposes.

Interculturalism

- Cross curricular guidelines on how best to create an intercultural and inclusive school as provided in Intercultural Education in the Primary School (NCCA, 2005), Information as provided by IILT (Integrate Ireland Language & Training) publications and guidelines from 'Up and Away' language programme are used to inform the school's efforts to foster appreciation of inter-culturalism and promote integration of EAL students.
- Report Cards are translated if necessary and notes are often translated going home. A translator can be facilitated at PT Meetings at a parent's request. An app to assist in pupils translation can be used where deemed beneficial/ necessary.
- Other countries and cultures are studied during the SESE time slot.
- Every effort is made to make EAL students feel welcomed and valued.

Communication with Parents

- Whitegate NS acknowledges the importance of communication with and involvement in school of parents of EAL students. School efforts in this regard are once again informed by IILT publications and 'Up and Away' language programme.
- A welcoming school environment facilitates parental contact with the school.
- Appointments can be made to speak with Principal, Class/Resource Teachers. Parental involvement in school events is sought and appreciated.

Where discrete EAL Language Support is provided

Role of the Language Support Teacher:

"In collaboration with parents and class teachers, support teachers identify students requiring additional language support, assess students' proficiency in English, decide on appropriate language programmes, deliver the programmes and record and monitor

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students' progress. They collaborate with class teachers to ... support the development of students' English language proficiency." Circular 0015/2009.

- The responsibility of the support teacher is to deliver a programme of English language tuition which is based on the primary curriculum and which prepares and supports the student in accessing classroom learning and in socializing with peers. "The principal objective of the language support programme is to integrate the student as quickly as possible into all mainstream learning and activities of the school." (Up and Away p. 20)

Programme Planning

- Thirteen units of work of the EAL 'Up and Away' Language programme are where possible aligned with the themes being covered seasonally in the child's class.

These units are:

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

- The language of maths and literacy is also important at all levels. In Middle and Senior classes the vocabulary of SESE, History, Geography and Science is also significant.

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- With older students EAL support time may be used to introduce classroom work at a slower rate thus enabling the EAL student to engage more fully when material is covered in class.

Recording and Monitoring of Students' Progress

With reference to Circular 0015/2009: *'All documentation in relation to the administration of tests must be retained by the school for audit/inspection purposes.'*

- Support Files are attached to student files on Aladdin. With regard to EAL students in Class settings, recording and monitoring of progress will follow school policy for other non-EAL students in these groupings.

Individual Teacher Planning and Reporting

- The EAL support teacher will maintain a weekly teaching plan and a monthly progress record detailing work covered from 'Up and Away' / alternative programme.
- Teachers with responsibility for streamed groups will detail work on a weekly and monthly basis also with an overall yearly scheme specifically catering for the needs of their target group including EAL students.

Staff Role and Responsibilities

- The role of the SET/ EAL Teacher who teaches English as a Foreign Language is a collaborative responsibility shared by all: The Board of Management, Principal, Class teachers, Learning Support teachers, parents and children.

Role of Board of Management

- To oversee the development, implementation and review of the provision of Language support in the school.
- Ensure adequate classroom accommodation and teaching resources are provided for the EAL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers.

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Role of Principal

- 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 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 cooperation with the language support teacher.

Role of the Language Support Teacher

The main role of the Learning/Language Support Teacher is to support the student's development of English language proficiency so that he or she can gradually gain access to

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the curriculum, ultimately achieving the same education opportunities as English speaking peers by:

- Working in consultation with the class teacher to set achievable targets for each student.
- Preparing the student, on an ongoing basis, to access mainstream learning.
- Helping the student to develop appropriate strategies and skills to support their learning.
- The responsibility of the Learning/Language Support Teacher is to provide a programme of work based on the primary curriculum.
- Each student is entitled to two full years of language support from the time they start at school.
- When a student has additional difficulties, it may be appropriate for him or her to receive learning support.
- For students entering our school at the Infant level, it is expected that they will develop literacy, classroom language, vocabulary etc at not a greatly dissimilar rate to their peers.
- Students entering our school at Senior Primary level can experience a greater challenge. Therefore, there is a need for a systematic and on-going needs analysis to support the acquisition of language on that level.

Assessment, Monitoring and Review

- Ongoing observation of the language and literacy to identify the needs of each student.
- Assessment using tools like The Primary Schools Assessment Kit
- Implement the school policies on screening and selecting students for supplementary teaching when appropriate.

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- Record Keeping: Keep appropriate records on each student to ensure continuity from year to year.

Liaising with Parents

Effective communication with parents is essential to the success of a language support programme..

- To be accessible to parents in a supportive role.
- Meet parents at organised parent teacher meetings either with the class teacher or individually to discuss their student's progress.

Success Criteria

- Level of inclusion of EAL students in Whitegate NS
- Knowledge of and respect for cultural, ethnic & linguistic diversity
- Academic progress of EAL students as indicated in standardized and diagnostic test results
- Feedback from school principal, teaching staff, SNAs, parents, DES inspectors

Ratification and Review:

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management in June 2023.

Signed _____

Date _____

Chairperson of the Board of Management.