



Feabhra 2020

## **Policy on Granting an Irish Exemption**

### **Introduction and Rationale**

This policy was drafted by the staff and Board of Management in response to recent changes in Special Educational provisions. It is written in accordance with Circular 0052/2019 which revises Circular 12/96.

### **Procedures**

#### **Granting an exemption from the study of Irish**

An exemption from Irish should be granted only in exceptional circumstances as per requirements of Circular 52/2019.

*2.1 Exempting a pupil from the study of Irish should be considered only in exceptional circumstances. The decision to exempt a pupil from the study of Irish is an important decision that has implications for his/her access to the curriculum and his/her future learning. As per section 2.2 Circular 52/2019. The decision to grant an exemption from the study of Irish is made by the principal teacher, but it must be made following detailed discussion with the pupil's parent(s)/guardian(s), the class teacher, special education teachers, and the pupil. A decision to grant an exemption should only be considered in the circumstances set out below.(section 2.2 Circular 52/2019)*

#### ***The circumstances in which a pupil may be granted an exemption from the study of Irish.***

*Exemption from the study of Irish may be allowed in the following exceptional circumstances only:*

- a. pupils whose education up to 12 years of age (or up to and including the final year of their primary education) was received outside the State and where they did not have opportunity to engage in the study of Irish*  
**OR**
- b. pupils who were previously enrolled as recognised pupils in primary schools who are being re-enrolled after a period spent abroad, provided that at least three consecutive years have elapsed since the previous enrolment in the state and are at least 12 years of age on re-enrolment*  
**OR**
- c. pupils who:*
  - i. have at least reached second class*

**And**

*ii. present with significant learning difficulties that are persistent despite having had access to a differentiated approach to language and literacy learning in both Irish and English 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 on-going 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**

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

**OR**

*(d) Children of foreigners who are diplomatic or consular representatives in Ireland*

### **2.3 Procedures for granting an exemption from the study of Irish**

Prior to making an application you are advised to consult with your daughter's class teacher, liaising SEN teacher and with our SEN Co-ordinator so you are fully aware of the implications of an Irish exemption for your daughter.

Class teachers will be required to complete a Student Support Belgrove Senior Girl's School Checklist For Recording the Differentiated Approach Used with This Student. The school will also perform discrete tests as per [www.education.ie/en/Schools/Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/Resources-Publications.html](http://www.education.ie/en/Schools/Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/Resources-Publications.html)

*“A parent/guardian must make an application in writing to the principal of the school for a Certificate of Exemption from the study of Irish on behalf of a pupil **using form Appendix 2: Application for Exemption From The Study of Irish***

#### ***a) Considering an application for exemption***

*The principal will:*

- 1. Ensure that the date of receipt of the application by the school is recorded on the form.*
- 2. Acknowledge receipt of the application for exemption from the study of Irish in writing.*
- 3. Discuss the written application with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and confirm the sub-paragraph on which the application is based (2.2a, 2.2b, 2.2c or 2.2d) as soon as practicable following receipt of a written application.*

4. Advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the next steps in processing the application.
5. Inform the parent(s)/guardian(s)/pupil regarding any implication of an exemption from the study of Irish for the student while in post-primary education and into the future.
6. Inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) that the application will be processed and the outcome confirmed in writing within 21 school days of receipt of the application.
7. Explain to the parent(s)/guardian(s) that a signed Certificate of Exemption will issue where a decision is reached that an exemption from the study of Irish may be granted.
8. Inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) that, where an application is refused, the school's decision may be appealed to the Irish Exemptions Appeal Committee within 30 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent(s)/guardian(s).
9. Explain to the parent(s)/guardian(s) the arrangements for the pupil's learning in the case of an exemption being granted.

#### **b) Recording the decision**

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.

The Certificate of Exemption will also state the name and address of the school, the school roll number, the pupil's name, date of birth and the sub-paragraph under which the exemption is being granted.

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

## **2.4 Appeal**

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 this Circular 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/](http://www.education.ie/en/Parents/Information/Irish-Exemption/).

### **3. Arrangements for pupils who are exempt from the study of Irish.**

Schools, where appropriate, should take account of the literacy learning needs of pupils who are exempt from the study of Irish when deploying available special educational needs resources. To support inclusive practices, a pupil who is exempt from the study of Irish should be included in a meaningful way in aspects of Irish language and cultural activities in line with his/her ability and interests.

### **4. Supports for pupils who have no understanding of English when enrolled**

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*A pupil who has no understanding of English when enrolled and whose education up to 12 years of age or up to the final year of his/her primary education was received outside the state, should be provided with intensive English as an Additional Language (EAL) in preparation for his/her full engagement with the Primary Language Curriculum at a level commensurate with his/her ability*

**Ratification and Communication**

This policy will be in operation in the school year 2019/2020, having been ratified by the Board of Management.

Every teacher will be provided with a copy of this policy for their files.

Date of next policy review: June 2021 or sooner if required

Signed on Behalf of the Board of Management (hard copy I principal's office):

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Chairman: Dr. P.J Sexton

Date: February 2020

*As per Exemptions from the Study of Irish: Guidelines For primary School (English Medium) 28<sup>th</sup> August 2019, the following documents must be completed.*

All documents related to this policy can be accessed through the following link

<https://www.education.ie/en/Parents/Information/Irish-Exemption/exemptions-from-the-study-of-irish-guidelines-for-primary-schools.pdf>

*APPENDIX 1: APPLICATION FOR EXEMPTION FROM THE STUDY OF IRISH*

*APPENDIX 2: CHECKLISTS FOR PROCESSING APPLICATIONS FOR EXEMPTION*

*APPENDIX 3: CHECKLIST FOR PROCESSING APPLICATIONS FOR EXEMPTION FROM THE STUDY OF IRISH IN ACCORDANCE WITH CIRCULAR 0052/2019*

*Pupils who are re-enrolling following a period spent abroad, provided that at least three consecutive years have elapsed since the previous enrolment in the state and are at least 12 years of age on re-enrolment*

*APPENDIX 4: CHECKLIST FOR PROCESSING APPLICATIONS FOR EXEMPTION FROM THE STUDY OF IRISH IN ACCORDANCE WITH CIRCULAR 0052/2019*

*Pupils who have at least reached second class and present with significant and persistent learning difficulties and present with a Standardised Score in a discrete test at/below the 10th percentile in either Word Reading, Reading Comprehension or Spelling*

*APPENDIX 5: CHECKLIST FOR PROCESSING APPLICATIONS FOR EXEMPTION FROM THE STUDY OF IRISH IN ACCORDANCE WITH CIRCULAR 0052/2019*

*Children of foreigners who are diplomatic or consular representatives in Ireland*

*APPENDIX 6: CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION FROM THE STUDY OF IRISH Circular 0052/2019*

*APPENDIX 7: Frequently Asked Questions*

## Exemptions from the Study of Irish

### Primary Circular 0052/2019

[www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie) Irish Exemptions (Parents- Information-Irish Exemption-FAQs)

#### **24. What are the implications of not studying Irish for my child?**

Irish language requirements for National University of Ireland (NUI) Matriculation purposes and entry requirements to degree courses / programmes of study is at the discretion of the NUI. Other colleges and universities also have the autonomy to set their own entry requirements. These requirements may be subject to change and it is therefore important that schools access the relevant information. Information on entry requirements can be accessed on college websites. Typically, at post-primary level, guidance teachers have access to this information.

It is important that parents/guardians and pupils/students are made aware that Irish is an entry requirement for access to programmes for initial teacher education (primary) offered in the four state funded Higher Education Institutions (HEIs):

- Marino Institute of Education, Griffith Ave., Dublin 9 ([www.mie.ie](http://www.mie.ie))
- Mary Immaculate College, Limerick ([www.mic.ul.ie](http://www.mic.ul.ie))
- DCU Institute of Education, DCU, St. Patrick's Campus, Drumcondra, Dublin 9 ([www.dcu.ie](http://www.dcu.ie))
- Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education, National University of Ireland Maynooth, Co Kildare ([www.maynoothuniversity.ie](http://www.maynoothuniversity.ie))

The DES sets the minimum entry requirements for entry to the above programmes including the core subjects of Irish, English and Mathematics. Information on entry requirements is available at <https://www.education.ie/en/Information-Staff/Information/-New-Teachers/-Initial-Teacher-Education-ITE-Primary.html>