

March 2022

Policy on the Granting of Exemptions from the Study of Irish

Introduction

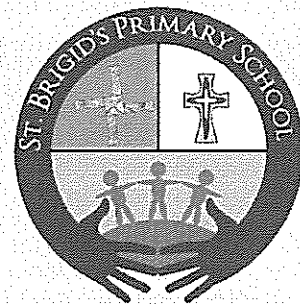
This policy was drafted by staff and Board of Management of St. Brigid's Primary School in response to changes in special educational provisions (see Circular 52 Exemptions from the Study of Irish: Guidelines for Primary Schools).

Rationale

This policy reflects the introduction of new guidelines issued by the Department of Education in September 2019. Circular 52/2019 is a revision of Circular 12/1996 and forms the basis for this revised school policy. These guidelines have been developed in response to the extensive feedback received in response to the publication of draft circulars in relation to exemptions from Irish. The guidelines are also informed by the principles of the Primary Language Curriculum (PLC) and follow the needs based model as set out in the Continuum of Support for students with Special Educational Needs. It is acknowledged that despite the flexibility of the PLC and the steps taken and supports put in place within the Continuum of Support in our school that some children may continue to struggle to make adequate progress in acquiring the language of instruction in our school, namely English. In such circumstance and following the guidelines set out in Circular 52/2019 and the procedure and process set out below in this policy, an exemption from the study of Irish may be granted.

Relationship to School Ethos.

This policy is in keeping with the mission statement and vision of our school, which strives to enhance the self- esteem of all our students through providing for the intellectual, physical, moral and cultural needs of all, ensuring that every child is provided with every opportunity to reach their potential.



Aims and Objectives

The purpose of this policy is to provide clarity surrounding the application, process and procedures which are to be adhered to should a child be granted or considered for an exemption from the study of Irish in our school. At all times this policy aims to allow for pupils of differing abilities, interests and circumstances, enhances inclusivity within our school and strives to enable all children of all abilities to access the curriculum in our school. This policy ensures that our procedures comply with Circular 0052/2019.

Criteria for Exemption from the Study of Irish

The following criteria for granting an Irish exemption are set out in Circular 52/2019 and are quoted below. In granting an exemption from Irish in our school, the school authorities, in consultation with parents, must be satisfied that the criteria are met and the process has been followed correctly.

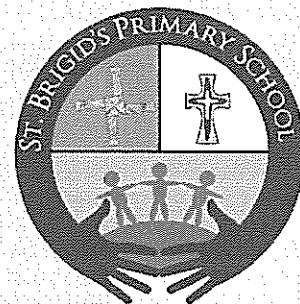
2.2 The circumstances in which a pupil may be granted an exemption from the study of Irish

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 ongoing cycle of assessment, target-setting and 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

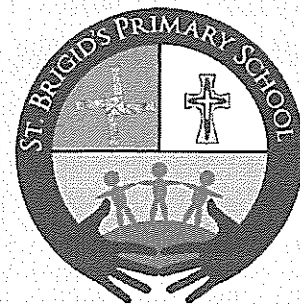
d. children of foreigners who are diplomatic or consular representatives in Ireland.

Procedures for granting an exemption from the study of Irish

A parent/guardian must make an application in writing (using the form in *Appendix A*) to the Principal of the school for a Certificate of Exemption from the study of Irish on behalf of a pupil.

The Principal will:

- Ensure that the date of receipt of the application by the school is recorded on the form.
- Acknowledge receipt of the application for exemption from the study of Irish in writing (see *Appendix B*).



- Discuss the written application with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and confirm the sub-paragraph on which the application is based (2.3, 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6 above) as soon as practicable following receipt of a written application.
- Advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the next steps in processing the application.
- Inform the parent(s)/guardian(s)/pupil of possible implications of an exemption from the study of Irish for the student while in post-primary education and into the future.
- 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.
- 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. (*Appendix C*)-

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).

- Explain to the parent(s)/guardian(s) the arrangements for the pupil's learning in the case of an exemption being granted.

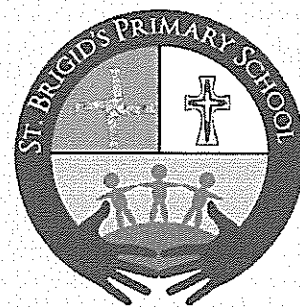
Process for Consideration

The decision to consider an exemption for any child in our school should only be entered in exceptional circumstances, and where due consideration has been given to the child's future learning.

The criteria for an exemption from Irish are set out above and these must be satisfied in all instances for such an exemption to be granted.

In circumstance 2.2(a), 2.2(b) or 2.2(d) the following steps are to be followed;

1. The parents, in consultation with the school principal, class teacher and support teacher, will on behalf of the pupil make a formal written application to the school for a Certificate of Exemption from the study of Irish. (*Appendix A*)



2. If the school authorities are satisfied that the criteria are applicable, then a Certificate of Exemption on these grounds shall be granted. *Appendix C*

In circumstances 2.2(c) the following steps are to be followed;

1. A meeting will be held with the class teacher and support teacher to determine if significant learning difficulties 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 is required. This should include Student Support Plans detailing regular reviews of learning needs as part of an ongoing cycle of assessment, target-setting and evidence-informed intervention and review, including test scores (word reading, reading comprehension, spelling, and other scores of language/literacy) at key points of review.

2. An agreed approach record with regard to Irish Exemption will be kept as part of the pupil's School Support Plan

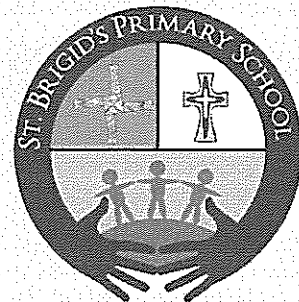
3. A further block of differentiated support may be implemented for a period of at least 8-10 weeks, followed by a further meeting where the student's response to the targeted intervention will be reviewed.

4. At least one standardised test will be administered to determine if a score below the 10th percentile is achieved. The test used at this stage may be the Drumcondra test in Word Reading, Comprehension or Spelling, the Wechsler Individual Attainment Test (WIAT) or other discrete test as recommended by the DES in Circular 52/2019.

In circumstances where an external assessment has been carried out with the pupil, and an alternative discrete test as recommended in circular 52/2019 has been conducted, the results of this test will be considered in granting the exemption.

5. Should an attainment at/below the 10th percentile be attained in Word Reading, Comprehension or Spelling, then an exemption from the study of Irish can be granted.

ST. BRIGID'S PRIMARY SCHOOL



Note

An exemption from Irish excludes a child from written Irish and from reading Irish. Every effort will be and should be made to include every pupil in a meaningful way in some aspects of oral work and to include the pupil in Irish culture and history of the language.

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

Where appropriate and where possible, the school will endeavour to take account of the literacy learning needs of pupils who are exempt from the study of Irish when deploying available special educational needs resources.

Parents/guardians are reminded of the need to keep the certificate safe as it is their responsibility to ensure that a copy of this certificate is made available to any school to which their child enrolls.

Appeals Procedure

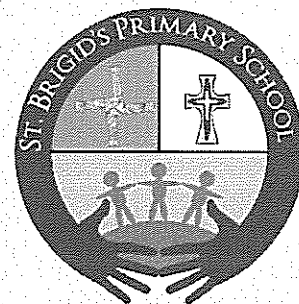
Where the application for exemption from the study of Irish is refused, a parent/guardian can appeal the school's decision to the Irish Exemptions Appeal Committee (IEAC). The deliberations of the IEAC will focus solely on the process the school engaged in reaching its decision. The IEAC will consider how the school followed the process as prescribed in the 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

Roles and Responsibilities:

Principal, class and SET teachers and the Board of Management will contribute to the implementation of school procedures.

ST. BRIGID'S PRIMARY SCHOOL



Success Criteria:

- Successful integration of new international pupils and pupils with learning difficulties.
- A considered and transparent approach to the granting of exemptions is established.
- Clarity for teaching staff, parents and children regarding exemptions from Irish is established.

Ratification

This policy was review and ratified by the Board of Management of St Brigid's Primary School on

Signed; Kerin Duff

Chairperson Board of Management

Date 9/3/22

Signed; Cathy Gillivan

Principal

Date 9/3/2022

Review Date; March 2024

Application for Exemption from the Study of Irish St Brigid's Primary School - Roll No 15512L

For completion by the parent(s)/guardian(s)

Name of pupil	
Date of birth	
Class	
Name of school	St Brigid's Primary School, Moate

I/We wish to apply for an exemption from the study of Irish on behalf of our daughter

Please indicate (✓) the ground for applying for an exemption from the study of Irish in accordance with Circular 0052/2019.

2.2a: pupils whose education up to 12 years of age (or up to and including the final year of primary education) was received outside the state and where they did not have opportunity to engage in the study of Irish.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.2b: 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.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.2c: pupils who have at least reached second class <u>and</u> present with significant and persistent learning difficulties <u>and</u> present with a Standardised Score in a discrete test at/below the 10 th percentile in either Word Reading, Reading Comprehension or Spelling.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.2d: children of foreigners who are diplomatic or consular representatives in Ireland.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please provide detail of any supporting documentation being submitted to the school

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

We have discussed this matter with the school and have been made aware that our daughter, may, into the future, be restricted from certain jobs where Irish may be a requirement and that there may be other longer-term, as yet unforeseen, implications (e.g. while in post-primary education)

We have also been made aware that the school's goal is to maximise the child's participation and enjoyment in Irish oral language and to ensure she feels part of the Irish culture and ethos of the school, thereby increasing the likelihood of her being able to re-engage with Irish in the future.

I/we the undersigned understand that documentation provided may be reviewed for the purpose of processing this application by relevant school personnel and other professionals where necessary.

Signed _____ **Date:** _____

Signed _____ **Date:** _____

For the school:

Date of receipt of application: _____

Principal: _____

Date: _____

School roll number: 15512L