



*"In special education, there's too much emphasis placed
on the deficit and not enough on the strength."*

Dr Temple Grandin, Colorado State University

MISSION STATEMENT

The Intermediate School, Killorglin is a lay, Catholic school under unitary management. The school is open to all young people, acknowledging their different beliefs.

The school wishes to educate its pupils in happy and pleasant surroundings allowing them to achieve their potential, develop their talents, to strive for excellence and to search for truth.

The pupils will learn to appreciate loyalty to their families, to school, to Country and to God and, in learning this, will understand service to their fellow human beings and to their community.

Pupils will always be encouraged to enjoy leisure in life, to participate in sport and creative activities, to be inventive and to be generous with their talents.

The policy of the Intermediate School is to create equality of opportunity for both girls and boys. This aspiration of equality is applied in the choice and range of subjects, in educational trips and in social activities.

The school strives to create an atmosphere which enables the young people to relate to one another in a way which is characterised by mutual respect.

The aim of the school is to produce a concerned Christian who is conscious of his dignity as a person, is familiar with his heritage and is equipped to take his place in his own environment.

The school also aims to foster a sense of community between teachers and pupils, a strong work ethic, a feeling of comradeship and a sense of dedication, help, encouragement and conviviality.

The school encourages pride and enthusiasm in our Irish background, a love of country and its tradition and to realise that we are all members of a larger world.

All these elements are bonded together by a strong School dedication to its Catholic Christian ethos.

STATEMENT OF INCLUSION

A core value of our school and our policies, is the commitment to ensuring that each individual is guaranteed an inclusive and equitable educational experience. The Intermediate School will strive to create a secure, respectful, collaborative and stimulating community in which everyone is valued and in which every student is encouraged to achieve to the highest degree possible within his/her potential.

POLICY RATIONALE

This policy aims to ensure that appropriate procedures are in place so that an accurate and appropriate assessment of the needs of students with special educational needs is carried out, monitored and reviewed. The school identifies and attempts to secure and implement the necessary resources required to meet these needs.

This policy aims to implement the legislative requirements of the Education Act (1998), Education Welfare Act (2000), Equal Status Act (2000), the Education for People with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN 2004 - on implementation) and all relevant data protection legislation.

POLICY AIMS

The Intermediate School seeks to ensure that all students are provided, as far as is possible, with an educational experience which is accessible, inclusive and appropriate to their individual needs.

Within the constraints of available resources, all students with special educational needs who are admitted to the school, shall have access to participate in and benefit from an education suitable to their needs.

The school shall actively seek adequate resources, equipment, staff, expertise and accommodation from the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), Department of Education & Science (DES) and other relevant agencies.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

- To provide opportunities for students to acquire the basic personal skills, social skills, literacy skills and numeracy skills needed for them to reach their full potential in life.
- To identify the special educational needs of all incoming students and to continually attempt to identify their needs throughout their school career.
- To monitor and review these needs regularly.
-]reflects the ethos and nature of the school mission as well as legislative requirements.
- To ensure that this policy is monitored and amended when necessary to address changes in legislation and the needs of students in our care.
- To ensure that adequate resources/facilities are sought and provided, well-maintained and appropriately used.
- To keep teachers informed of new developments relating to Special Education Needs (SEN)/Learning Support (LS) and to provide staff training and development in areas relating to special educational needs.
- To respond to appeals by parents with respect to decisions made at this level.

Role of Teaching Staff

- To implement this policy by being aware of and catering for the special educational needs of students.
- To co-operate with the school procedures for identifying and addressing the special educational needs of students and to attend training/staff development provided in this area.
- To be familiar with the students listed in the Green Folder* and the information provided therein.
- To ensure that SEN students are offered a broad, balanced, and differentiated curriculum which challenges them to reach their full academic and personal potential.
- To ensure that SEN provision is fully inclusive in mainstream learning and teaching, and not viewed in isolation. This requires consideration of the needs of each student in the way teaching resources are selected, how lessons are planned/taught and how formative and summative assessments are conducted.
- To be familiar with and implement recommendations identified in students' education plans and, if necessary, to seek advice when addressing students with special educational needs.

- To integrate students with special education needs/learning difficulties into regular class as much as possible and to accommodate their withdrawal (where necessary) by assisting them with any necessary notes/activities missed.
- To foster students' positive self-esteem by giving genuine praise whenever possible and promoting achievable activities which yield success.
- To bring to the attention of the Learning Support Co-ordinator or Principal concerns about students who may be experiencing difficulties.

Role of the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO)

- The SENCO assists the Principal/Deputy Principal in coordinating the school's response to students who have special educational needs and/or learning difficulties.
- To assess the nature and extent of the learning difficulties experienced by students.
- In conjunction with the Principal/Deputy Principal, SEN Team, parents, students and other relevant agencies to compile, monitor and review student education plans.
- To disseminate this information and recommended teaching strategies to staff.
- To ensure that the Green Folder is updated as necessary.
- To make referrals/applications to the National Educational Psychological Service, NCSE, DES, State Examinations Commission (SEC) and other relevant agencies.
- To advise the Principal/Deputy Principal on issues relating to assessment, admission and provision for students with special educational needs/learning difficulties.
- To assist the Principal/Deputy Principal in devising a programme/timetable which addresses the needs identified through allocated 'Resource' hours, learning support classes and other provisions which are required to meet specific needs.
- To advise parents of any strategies available to them and to consult with them regularly to ensure that effective measures at home and at school complement each other.
- To assist the Examinations Secretary in ensuring that applications are submitted on behalf of students who require reasonable accommodations for State Examinations.

Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)

The duties and responsibilities of special needs assistants involve tasks of a non-teaching nature and are based on care needs. For example:

- Assisting students coming to school/going home (where necessary).
- Providing special assistance where needed, including helping the student to organise books, equipment, bag etc
- Assisting with activities outside the classroom where needed.
- Accompanying the student on school trips and tours where necessary.
- Helping with personal care and the administering of medication when needed.

A special needs assistant's role is to assist the student(s) with their care needs which may hinder them in accessing the curriculum, under the guidance of the classroom teacher.

Each student is exceptional, and the duties of the special needs assistant will be modified to support the particular needs of the student concerned.

Role of the Parents

- To consult with and share relevant information with the school which may help to enhance the student's educational experience.
- To support the procedures and programmes put in place by the school to address the needs of their son/daughter.
- To bring to the attention of school authorities any concerns they may have in relation to the school's provision for the special educational needs of students.
- To participate in compiling and reviewing their son/daughter's education plan and /or other programmes, facilities, resources put in place to address specific needs.

Role of the Students

- To co-operate fully with the school in the implementation of their education plan and /or other programmes, facilities, resources put in place to address their specific needs.
- To regularly attend Resource hours, learning support classes and/or other programmes/resources put in place to provide for their special education needs/learning difficulties.
- To participate in discussions and reviews of education plans/other programmes and inform the SENCO of areas in which they continue to have difficulties.

PROVISIONS AND PROCEDURES

The Intermediate School will seek appropriate resources/facilities from NCSE, Department of Education and Science and other relevant agencies to meet the needs of all our students.

Identification of Needs

Where possible, students who have provisions allocated to them in primary school will continue to have similar provisions in The Intermediate School. Parents are asked to provide all relevant information at enrolment in order to allow school authorities to apply to the NCSE and/or Department of Education and Science for resources/facilities.

Students whose needs are identified on admission or whilst enrolled in the school will have applications made on their behalf for appropriate hours, resources and facilities as soon as is possible. This will happen in consultation with the students, their parents, teachers and other relevant parties.

All incoming first year students are assessed through teacher observations and regular assessments. The school also receives transfer Passports from the students' primary schools.

Students with special education needs and/or learning difficulties also have transition meetings. These meetings may be attended by some or all of the following; the student, parents/guardians, Principal, Deputy Principal, members of the SEN team, NEPS psychologist and Primary School SEN team.

Inclusive In-Class Support

Students with special education needs and/or learning difficulties are generally supported within an inclusive whole-class environment. Subject teachers are kept informed of students with education plans and special educational needs. Teachers are familiar with teaching and learning strategies which enable effective differentiation and accessibility of the curricula for all students. Information for teaching staff on all students receiving SEN support is provided in the Green Folder which is kept in the Principal's Office.

Where possible SEN/LS hours will be utilised to provide team teaching and small class provision in a range of subjects to support students in accessing the curriculum.

Withdrawal Policy

Students who are identified as having special educational needs will be met by the SENCO and an education plan or support programme put in place.

In some cases, students may be advised to reduce the number of subjects studied to address their needs more effectively. Where possible, students will be timetabled for withdrawal assistance (resource hours /learning support classes) during the classes of subjects they do not study. However, due to a number of constraints, this is not always possible. In such cases, students and parents will be consulted and informed of the classes they will be withdrawn from.

Resource & Learning Support Classes

Students are generally allocated resource hours timetabled in literacy, numeracy and support strategies based on their needs. Where needs are of a more specific nature (e.g. ASD, social anxiety) we will work with the student and parents to determine how best to utilise this support time.

Physical Accommodation/ Facilities

Where students' physical difficulties are not catered for by our current accommodation funding and facilities will be sought from the Department of Education & Science in order to provide adequately for these needs.

In some cases, in the interest of Health & Safety admission may be deferred until these facilities are in place.

PROCEDURES FOR ACQUIRING AN EXEMPTION FROM IRISH

Exemptions from Irish are sought where appropriate in strict accordance with DES Circular 54/2022.

The school will consider granting an exemption for Irish in the following circumstances;

- A request is made by a student's parents/ guardian or recommendation made by member of staff.
- The student meets the criteria as required by DES circular 54/2022.

Where the school determines that the student does not meet the criteria specified in circular 54/2022 parents have the right to appeal this decision to the Department of Education & Skills.

CURRICULAR MODIFICATION

Exemptions from modern languages are considered on an individual basis in consultation with parents, class teachers, SENCO, Guidance Counsellor and the Principal/Deputy Principal.

Other curricular modifications are considered for individual students when necessary. Consultation between all relevant parties is deemed essential when making such decisions.

At Junior Cycle level, some students may take the L2LP as an alternative to the Level 3 Junior Cycle. This is decided in a consultative manner between the Principal/ Deputy Principal, parents, class teachers and the SEN team. Students may take L2LP courses in some or all subjects as deemed necessary.

The timetabled periods which become available due to such curricular modifications will be used, where feasible, to implement individual resource interventions and/or learning support. However, due to timetabling constraints this is not always possible.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STATE EXAMINATIONS (RACE)

Applications are made for all students identified as requiring Reasonable Accommodations for State Examinations (RACE) by the school's Examinations Secretary.

The procedures of the Department of Education and Science and the State Examinations Commission will be strictly adhered to.

The school makes the application for relevant accommodations for students who meet the criteria as laid down by the SEC at Junior Cycle. These accommodations can be reactivated for the Leaving Certificate if the student still has a need for the accommodations.

Where resources permit, and when deemed appropriate, readers, laptops, spelling & grammar waivers and other accommodations are available to students who qualify for such accommodations during the mock and house examinations.

DISABILITY ACCESS ROUTE TO EDUCATION (DARE)

DARE is the Disability Access Route to Education in the CAO process. The application has 3 sections.

1. Section A is completed by the student/ guardians online in their CAO application
 2. Section B is completed by the school *at the request* of the student/ guardian.
 3. Section C is the evidence required by a professional diagnosing the condition. There are restrictions on the type of report allowed. See www.accesscollege.ie
- Students interested in applying to CAO as a DARE applicant will need to ask the school to complete Section B.
 - The School will complete section B & send it home with the student for the parent/ guardian signature.
 - The student must return the form to the School to be signed and stamped by the Principal and a final copy left in the School office.
 - A copy will also be kept in the student's file.
 - It is the student's/ guardian's responsibility to send both Section B and Section C to CAO, Tower House, Eglinton Street, Galway before the deadline.

Deadlines are final with CAO and submission of forms, with no exceptions. For this reason, we ask that *students inform the School* that they wish to be considered for DARE *before December 15th* by making an appointment to complete Section B.

The school cannot guarantee an appointment in time to complete or sign the form if the request for Section B completion is not made before 1st March.

MONITORING & REVIEW PROCEDURES

Education plans and other support programmes will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis. The SEN Team will ensure that monitoring occurs throughout the school year through consultation with the students, teachers and parents and also through both formative and summative assessments.

Reviews will also take place and education plans/ programmes/ facilities will be evaluated as identified and agreed by those involved in the consultation review process. (Student, parents, teachers, SENCO, Principal, other relevant agencies)

The SENCO will meet regularly with the Guidance Counsellor, Principal & Deputy as well as with teachers of resource/learning support and team teaching to ensure ongoing monitoring and evaluation of SEN provision occurs.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

- Students with special educational needs are identified, assessed and receive appropriate provision.
- Suitable programmes are in place for individual students and for groups of students at both Junior & Senior cycle.
- Targets are set and recommendations made for SEN students. Student progress is measured and assessed through a variety of means appropriate to each individual and the targets set.

Ratified by: J. O' Dwyer

Date: 28/02/24

To: Management Authorities of all recognised Post-Primary Schools and the Chief Executive Officers of the Education and Training Boards

Exemptions from the Study of Irish – Revising Circular 0053/2019

1. Introduction

This Circular results from the initial review of the implementation of Circular 0053/2019 which is hereby withdrawn. Existing exemptions from the study of Irish granted under previous circulars and held by students will continue to apply until the end of their post-primary education.

Exemption from the study of Irish does not apply in schools where Irish is the medium of instruction.

Schools are required to record data on students who are exempt from the study of Irish and the reason for that exemption on the Post-Primary Online Database (P-POD), see section 2.3(c).

1.1 The purpose of the Circular

The purpose of this Circular is to advise recognised¹ English-medium² post-primary schools of the revised arrangements for the exemption of students from the study of Irish. The only circumstances in which consideration may be given to granting an exemption from the study of Irish are set out in subsection 2.2 of this Circular.

It should be noted that students have the option not to exercise the exemption granted, without any loss of the right to exercise it at a future time.

1.2 The principles underpinning this Circular

As the first official language in Ireland, and for fundamental cultural and historical reasons which are inextricably linked to Irish identity, the study of the Irish language is a key aspect of the learning experiences that are considered appropriate for students in recognised schools in Ireland. For these reasons, Irish is a core subject in the curriculum determined by the Minister for recognised Irish schools.

The decision to exempt a student from the study of Irish has very significant implications for his/her future learning and potential employment opportunities. Students should therefore be given every reasonable opportunity to participate in the learning of Irish for as long as possible. The policy of the Department of Education is to provide for the inclusive education of children with special educational needs in mainstream education, other than in circumstances where it would not be in the best interest of the child, or the effective education of children with whom they are to be educated.³ In line with the Department's policy schools are expected and encouraged to provide all students, to the greatest extent possible and in a meaningful way, with opportunities to participate in Irish language and cultural activities at a level appropriate to their learning needs. This Circular aims to support post-primary schools in addressing a wide diversity of needs

¹ Recognised School – means a school recognised by the Minister in accordance with section 10 of the Education Act, 1998.

² An English-medium school is a school where English (L1) is the primary language of instruction, except in the case of Irish (Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life: The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011- 2020, DES (2011).

³ Section 2, Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004

by providing a differentiated learning experience for students in an inclusive school environment. It is informed by the principles of inclusion and the benefits of bilingualism for all students that underpin the Framework for Junior Cycle (2015) and curricular provision in senior cycle.

Building on students' language learning experience as provided for in the *Primary Language Curriculum*, the specification for Junior Cycle Irish (L2) aims to consolidate and deepen their knowledge, understanding, values and language skills supporting their personal, cognitive and social development. The learning outcomes presented in the specification apply to all students. Students should be encouraged to study the language and achieve a level of personal proficiency that is appropriate to their ability.

This Circular is also set in the context of the Special Education Teaching Allocation⁴ model that allows mainstream schools to provide additional teaching support for all students who require such support in their schools based on their identified learning needs in school, as opposed to being based primarily upon a diagnosis of a particular disability. As students progress along their language learning journey into senior cycle, they are provided with opportunities to engage further with Irish at a level appropriate to their needs through a variety of programmes offered.

2. Granting an exemption from the study of Irish

2.1 An exemption should be granted only in exceptional circumstances

Exempting a student from the study of Irish will be considered only in those exceptional circumstances set out in section 2.2 of this Circular. The decision to exempt a student from the study of Irish is an important decision that has implications for his/her future learning. The decision to grant an exemption from the study of Irish is made by the principal, but it must be made following detailed discussion with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), the class teacher/s, special education teachers⁵ and the student. A decision to grant an exemption should only be considered in the circumstances set out in section 2.2 below.

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

An exemption from the study of Irish may be allowed in the following circumstances, 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3 or 2.2.4 only:

2.2.1 A student moving from a different country without previous experience of learning the Irish language

An exemption from the study of Irish may be granted to a student whose education was received outside the State (for a minimum period of three consecutive years) where he/she did not have opportunity to engage in the study of Irish

AND either (a) or (b)

(a) who is not less than 12 years of age on the day of their enrolment⁶ or re-enrolment

OR

(b) who is enrolling following the completion of the full course of primary education recognised by another state.

⁴ Circular 0014/2017, Circular 0008/2019 and Circular 0020/2022 to the: Management Authorities of recognised Post Primary Schools: Secondary, Community and Comprehensive Schools and the Chief Executive Officers of the Education and Training Boards Special Education Teaching Allocation 2022/23

⁵ Including the teacher from the Visiting Teacher Service, where one is assigned to the student

⁶ For the purposes of this Circular where students enrol in the final 2 months of an academic year, their enrolment/re-enrolment will be considered to take place on the first day of the following academic year.

2.2.2 A student who experiences significant literacy difficulties which are an obstacle to their learning across the curriculum

An exemption from the study of Irish may be granted to a student:

(i) who presents with significant literacy difficulties that are persistent despite having had access to a differentiated approach to language and literacy learning in all subjects/across the curriculum and 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
- evidence-informed intervention and review, including test scores (Word Reading, Reading Comprehension, Spelling, other scores of language/literacy) at key points of review

AND

(ii) who, at the time of the application for exemption presents with a standardised score on a discrete test in either Word Reading, Reading Comprehension or Spelling at/below the 10th percentile.

2.2.3 A student who experiences a high level of multiple and persistent needs that are a significant barrier to the student's participation and engagement in their learning and school life

It is recognised that there is a small cohort of students who have a high level of multiple and persistent needs that are a significant barrier to their participation and engagement in their learning and school life. In the case of these students, consideration may need to be given to adjusting the range of learning experiences to ensure that their needs are met and that they may engage purposefully in their learning in school. In very exceptional circumstances, this means that consideration may need to be given to exempting them from the study of Irish.

An exemption from the study of Irish may be granted to a student:

(i) who experiences a high level of multiple and persistent needs that are a very significant and continuing barrier to his/her participation and engagement in his/her learning and school life

AND

(ii) whose school has substantial written evidence that these needs persist despite targeted and individualised Student Support Plans to address those needs

AND

(iii) whose school has substantial written evidence that these individualised Student Support Plans have been implemented over not less than two school years, and have been monitored and reviewed by the school in collaboration with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student

AND

(iv) who has been given every reasonable opportunity to participate in the learning of Irish in mainstream classes for as long as possible in keeping with the integrated approach to language skills development and the communicative approach underpinning the Specification for Junior Cycle Irish (L2) and the Leaving Certificate Syllabuses for Irish.

AND

(v) the principal is satisfied that the granting of an exemption is in the overall best interests of the student concerned.

2.2.4 A student in a recognised⁷ special school or class or who was previously enrolled in a recognised special school or class or who has a recommendation⁸ and has been deemed eligible⁹ for a place in a recognised special school and/or in a special class in a mainstream school

(i) Where a student is currently enrolled in a recognised special school or special class in a mainstream school or who has previously been enrolled in a recognised special school or special class in a mainstream school and who is transitioning to mainstream provision, that student is automatically entitled to an exemption from the study of Irish without an application.

OR

(ii) Where a student has a recommendation and has been deemed eligible for a place in a recognised special school and/or in a special class in a mainstream school, an application for an exemption from the study of Irish will be required.

2.3 Procedures for granting an exemption from the study of Irish

(a) Steps required for a valid application for an exemption from the study of Irish

1. A parent/guardian on behalf of a student or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, must make an application in writing to the principal of the school for a Certificate of Exemption from the study of Irish.

2. The school staff shall mark the date of receipt of the application on the application form and issue an acknowledgement to the parent(s)/guardian(s), or the student as relevant, upon receipt of the application.

3. At the earliest opportunity a school official should contact the applicant(s) and:

- discuss the written application with the applicant(s) and confirm the sub-paragraph on which the application is based (as outlined in section 2.2 above) N.B. If a parent/guardian, or the student where he/she is the applicant, does not confirm the sub-paragraph under which the application is based then the application is null and void and no further processing of the application will take place. Only criteria contained in this Circular can be considered as grounds for an exemption from the study of Irish and no other exceptional circumstances can be considered.

- advise the applicant(s) of the steps involved in processing the application.

- inform the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student and the student on whose behalf an application is made of the implications of an exemption from the study of Irish for the student while in post-primary education and into the future.

4. The application should be fully processed and the outcome confirmed in writing within 21 school days of receipt of the application.

⁷ A recognised special school/class is a primary or post-primary level class sanctioned and resourced by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE). See <https://ncse.ie/> for a list of such schools/classes

⁸ The recommendation for the student to be placed in a special school or special class meets the specifications for such placement as determined by the NCSE and the student has been deemed eligible and/or is awaiting the recommended placement.

⁹ See Exemptions from the Study of Irish: Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools (English-medium), DE (2022).

5. Where a decision is reached that an exemption from the study of Irish may be granted a signed Certificate of Exemption will be issued to the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student and a copy will be held by the school in the student's file. The record keeping requirements are outlined further at 2.3(c) below.

6. Where an application is refused, the principal must inform the applicant(s) in writing outlining the reasons for refusal and notifying the applicant(s) that the school's decision may be appealed to the Irish Exemptions Appeal Committee within 30 calendar days of the date of the written decision.

(b) Considering an application for exemption

In considering an application for exemption from the study of Irish the principal will

1. review the application and any documentation provided by the applicant(s);
2. consult with the student's class teacher/s;
3. consult with the special education teacher and the assigned teacher from the Visiting Teacher Service where relevant;
4. review school documentation for the evidence outlined in subsection 2.2;
5. consult the following as appropriate;
 - *Exemptions from the Study of Irish: Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools* and the supporting documents maintained by the Department on the Government webpage on exemptions from the study of Irish: www.gov.ie/en/service/irish-exemption/
 - *Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools: Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools* developed by the National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS), the Inspectorate and Special Education Section, DES (2017): <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/56c43-supporting-pupils-and-students-with-special-educational-needs-guidelines-for-schools/>
 - *Special Educational Needs: A Continuum of Support*, NEPS (2007): <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/dca316-special-education-needs-a-continuum-of-support/>
 - *Student Support Teams in Post-Primary Schools: A Guide to Establishing a Team or Reviewing an Existing Team*, NEPS (2021): <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/97aa18-national-educational-psychological-service-neps-resources-and-public/>
 - Catalogue of Wellbeing Resources for Schools: [gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie) - [Catalogue of Wellbeing Resources for Schools](http://www.gov.ie) (www.gov.ie)
 - *Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines*, NCCA (2021): https://ncca.ie/media/5062/updated-guidelines-2021_en.pdf

(c) Recording the decision

The outcome of the application process will be conveyed by the school in writing to the applicant.

Where an exemption is granted, a Certificate of Exemption, signed and dated by the school principal will be issued.

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

Certificate of Exemption is hyperlinked in the checklists within the Guidelines accompanying this Circular, published by the Department on the government website.

- ii. The arrangements for the student's learning will be explained to the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student.
- iii. Parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student 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.
- iv. The application form, all supporting documentation, and a copy of the Certificate of Exemption will be retained by the school in accordance with data protection legislation and will be made available for inspection by authorised officers of the Department. In maintaining such documentation, schools should ensure that they have obtained appropriate parental/guardian consent for the retention and use of such records.
- v. In addition, where an exemption from the study of Irish is granted, the school should update the student's record on the Post-Primary Online Database (P-POD) as soon as possible to include the reason for that exemption.

Where an application is refused, a copy of the application form, together with the letter of refusal and all supporting documentation, will be retained by the school in accordance with data protection legislation. The school should maintain the records for at least the duration of the student's enrolment in the school. In maintaining such documentation, schools should ensure that they have obtained appropriate parental/guardian/student consent for the retention and use of such records.

2.4 Appeal

Where the application for exemption from the study of Irish is refused, an applicant can appeal the school's decision to the Irish Exemptions Appeals Committee (IEAC). The IEAC will comprise three persons who shall be selected from a panel of persons established and maintained by the Minister, having regard to the need for each IEAC to have available to it:

- Experience and skills in the provision of or inspection of special education in schools
- Experience and skills in the area of educational psychology and/or child and adolescent wellbeing and mental health
- Experience and skills in the leadership and administration of schools
- Experience and skills in the initial or continuing education of teachers of students with special educational needs.

The IEAC will make a decision on whether the exemption should be granted or not, inform the school of the decision and require the school to give effect to their decision. In making a decision the IEAC will consider the decision of the school and the grounds given for refusing the application, the criteria set out in this Circular and any supporting documentation that was available to the school, contained in the Student Support Plan(s) and any supplementary information provided to the school by the applicant. The appeal should be made on the appropriate form published on the Department's website.

The appeal must be lodged within 30 calendar days from the date of the written decision of the school not to grant an exemption was notified in writing to the applicant. Irish Exemption Appeal Form and Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools can be accessed at www.gov.ie/en/service/irish-exemption/

3. Arrangements for students who are exempt from the study of Irish

Schools, where appropriate, should take account of the literacy learning needs of students who are exempt from the study of Irish when deploying available special education teaching resources.

Students who are exempt from the study of Irish may also be allowed to substitute another subject, short course or area of learning for Irish. To support inclusive practices, a student 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. It should be noted that students have the option not to exercise the exemption granted, without any loss of the right to exercise it at a future time.

4. Supports for students who have no understanding of English when enrolled

A student who has no understanding of English when enrolled should be provided with intensive English as an Additional Language (EAL) in preparation for his/her full engagement with the curriculum at a level commensurate with his/her ability.

5. When will the terms of this Circular come into effect?

The terms of this Circular will apply with effect from the beginning of the school year 2022/2023. The Circular will apply to all applications for exemption from the study of Irish for students who are currently enrolled in English-medium post-primary schools and to students who will enrol in English-medium post-primary schools in the future.

An exemption granted to a student may be operative throughout their enrolment in primary and post-primary school.

Students to whom exemptions were granted prior to the beginning of the school year 2022/23 will be unaffected by this Circular.

Applications for exemptions made under the terms of Circular 0053/2019 and which are being processed up to 31 August 2022 may be processed under the terms of that Circular 0053/2019 or under the terms of this Circular, whichever is best suited to the needs of the student concerned.

6. Reporting on exemptions granted to the Department

In order for students who are exempt from the study of Irish to be recognised by the Department, for grant payment and teacher allocation purposes, schools will be required on a monthly basis to record data on students who are exempt from the study of Irish and the reason for that exemption on the Post-Primary Online Database (P-POD).

As set out in subsection 2.3 above, a copy of the Certificate of Exemption must also be given to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student being exempted, or to the student where he/she is the applicant.

7. Students transitioning to other schools

It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student (the applicant) to ensure that a copy of the student's Certificate of Exemption is made available to the receiving school.

8. Monitoring and reviewing the Circular

The operation of this Circular will be monitored regularly by the Department. A review of the operation of this Circular will be conducted periodically.

9. Privacy Statement

Information on the treatment of personal data relating to the Irish Exemption Indicator recorded on the P-POD database is set out in the Privacy Notice for P-POD available [here](#).

Retention by schools of any applications and supporting documentation provided in respect of applications must be in line with Data Protection law and school data protection policies/protocols, if any.

In the context of the operation of this Circular, it is the school that makes the decision in relation to the granting of an exemption. As such, it is not appropriate or necessary to send confidential professional reports in relation to the student to the Department either as part of a query or as part of the appeals process. Any such material received will be returned to the sender and not retained by the Department. The appeals form only should be submitted to the Appeals Committee. Any additional material that may be required in relation to an appeal will be requested by the Committee.

10. Further information

Further information can be found at the following website: www.gov.ie/en/service/irish-exemption/

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