

COOLE NATIONAL SCHOOL



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Policy on Exemption from Irish

Introduction:

This policy was drafted by the staff and Board of Management (BOM) of Coole National School in response to Circular 0052/2019 'Exemptions from The Study of Irish'.

Rationale:

The purpose of this policy is to outline the circumstances in which pupils may be granted an exemption from the study of Irish.

Relationship to the school Ethos:

This policy is in keeping with the mission statement of Coole National School, which strives to enhance the self-esteem of all through providing for the intellectual, physical, moral and cultural needs of all.

Aims and Objectives:

- To enable children of all abilities to access the curriculum in a learner friendly manner.
- To allow for pupils of differing abilities, interests and circumstances.
- To enhance inclusivity within the school.
- To move away from a diagnostic categorical model to a needs-based model of Special Educational Supports.

Granting an Exemption from the study of Irish:

Exempting a pupil from the study of Irish will 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. 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 pupil's parent(s)/guardian(s), the class teacher, special education teachers, and the pupil. A decision to grant an exemption will only be considered in the circumstances set out below.

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

1. 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

2. 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

3. 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: 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

4. 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 to the Principal of our school for a Certificate of Exemption from the study of Irish on behalf of a pupil.

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 circumstances on which the application is based 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 Principal in writing to the parent(s)/guardian(s).

Where an exemption is granted, a Certificate of Exemption, signed and dated by the 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.

Right to 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/.

Inclusion:

- Arrangements for pupils who are exempt from the study of Irish Schools, where appropriate, will 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 will be included in a meaningful way in aspects of Irish language and cultural activities in line with his/her ability and interests.
- Pupils who have 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, will 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.

Reporting on exemptions granted to the Department:

Coole School Board of Management will be required to provide statistical information relating to the number and the grounds on which exemptions were granted in the previous school year as part of the Primary School Annual Census.

A copy of the Certificate of Exemption must also be given to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the pupil being exempted.

Pupils transitioning to other schools:

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

Roles and Responsibilities:

In-school Management, class teachers and the Board of Management of Coole NS will contribute to the implementation of school procedures.

Success Criteria:

- Seamless inclusion of non-nationals and pupils with learning difficulties.
- Happy school learning environment.
- Positive teacher/parental feedback.

Review

The policy will be reviewed after every three years. The policy may also be reviewed at an earlier time should a need arise.

Parents and staff will be informed of any amendments made.

Next Review: 2023

Signed:

PJ Gannon (Chairperson of Board of Management)

20/5/20

Signed:

Ciadhra Blake (Principal)

20/5/20