



Roll No.	19266T
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Policy	Irish Exemption Policy
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	Chairperson, Board of Management
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Irish Exemption Policy Our Lady of Fatima Special School

Mission

Our Mission in Our Lady of Fatima School is to provide a happy and secure learning environment where we value and develop the whole person to their full potential and celebrate each student's uniqueness and personal qualities.

Introduction

As per Circular 0054/2022, part 2.2.3 and part 2.2.4 along with Circular 0052/2019, "In the case of students in special schools and in special classes in mainstream schools, and in recognising the authority devolved to the management authorities in decision making concerning the Irish language learning needs of the students

concerned, a formal application for a Certificate of Exemption is not required. Students in special schools and in special classes in mainstream schools will therefore be exempt without holding a Certificate of Exemption. In line with the Department's policy above however, 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 policy seeks to clarify what this looks like in Our Lady of Fatima Special School.

Rationale

The formulation of this policy enables our school to effectively –

- Meet its requirements in line with Circular 0054/2022.
- Ensure that every child is accessing the curriculum in a broad, balanced and appropriate way and at a level that is appropriate to their learning needs.
- Encourage participation in cultural activities including Irish language and Irish cultural activities.

Participation

How do we ensure that we “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”.

- Using a themed approach coinciding with the PLC themes and incorporating Irish language and culture into music, art, and drama.
- Using story time to teach Irish cultural stories and myths and follow on activities related to these myths through language lessons, as appropriate.
- Teaching Irish cultural songs and Irish language songs during music lessons as appropriate.
- Teaching Irish dancing during PE as appropriate.
- Teaching Irish cultural stories and myths during drama and art lessons as appropriate.
- Weaving Irish historical stories and myths into SESE lessons as appropriate.

Roles and Responsibilities

The only exceptional circumstances in which a school may consider granting an exemption from the study of Irish is set out in Section 2.2 of Circular 0054/2022 in the case of primary schools and in Section 2.2 of Circular 0055/2022 for post-primary schools.

In certain circumstances that are outlined in the circular an exemption may be granted

to:

- A student, aged at least 12, moving from abroad without previous experience of learning the Irish language or a student who have completed their primary education abroad.
- A student who experiences significant literacy difficulties which are an obstacle to their learning across the curriculum.
- 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.
- A student in a recognised special school or class or who was previously enrolled in a recognised special school or class or who 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.
- A student whose parent(s)/guardian(s) is a/are diplomatic or consular representative(s) of another country to Ireland irrespective of age or educational history.

It is the department's policy that all students (including those granted an exemption) are provided with opportunities to participate in Irish language and cultural activities at a level appropriate to their learning needs, to the greatest extent possible, and in a meaningful way.

On enrolment to Our Lady of Fatima Special school, a discussion is held with new parents explaining to them the implications of an Irish Exemption.

Parents will be given the opportunity to sign a Certification of exemption from Irish with their enrolment pack when commencing school. Irish culture and language will be taught in classes at a level that is suited to the abilities of the students.

The overall responsibility for the day-to-day management of the school rests with the principal. The class teacher is responsible for classroom supervision and the implementation of all policies including the Irish Exemption Policy. The Board of Management is responsible for ensuring that policies are up to date and that they reflect current practice in the classrooms.