

Scoil an Chuilleanaigh

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Non Scholae Sed Vitae Discimus



Scoil An Chuilleanaigh

Policy on Exemption from Irish

Introduction:

This policy was drafted by staff and Board of Management (BoM) in response to recent changes in special educational provisions. Rationale: Circular 12/96 requires that some children may be entitled to an exemption from the study of Irish, for example children whose first language is not English and who were living abroad up to 5th class, and children with specific learning difficulties, general learning disabilities and/or sensory impairments.

Relationship to the school Ethos: This policy is in keeping with the mission statement of the 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 accommodate for pupils of differing abilities, interests and circumstances
- To enhance inclusivity within the school

Eligibility for Exemption from the study of Irish in Primary Schools (According to Circular 12/96) Pupils in the following circumstances may be allowed exemption from the study of Irish in national schools:-

(a) Pupils whose primary education up to 11 years of age was received in Northern Ireland or outside Ireland,

(c) Pupils

(i) who function intellectually at average or above average level but have a Specific Learning Disability of such a degree of severity that they fail to achieve expected levels of attainment in basic language skills in the mother tongue, or

(ii) who have been assessed as having a general learning disability due to serious intellectual impairment and are also failing to attain adequate levels in basic language skills in the mother tongue, or

(iii) who have been assessed as having a general learning disability due to serious sensory impairment, and are also failing to attain adequate levels in basic language skills in the mother tongue. The evidence of such a disability must be furnished by a qualified psychologist, supported in the case of (iii) by a report from an appropriate medical specialist. In addition, a full report on the pupil must be furnished by the school.

- (d) Pupils from abroad, who have no understanding of English when enrolled, would be required to study one language only, Irish or English;
- (e) Children of foreigners who are diplomatic or consular representatives in Ireland;
- (f) Children from other countries in whose case the Minister is satisfied that they are resident in this country as political refugees.

Pupils from the above categories will be allowed to remain in the class during the Irish lesson so that they may have an opportunity to gain a knowledge of spoken Irish and to participate in the learning activities. Alternatively, other suitable arrangement may be made such as allocating school work on other subject areas.

1. An exemption granted to a student will be operative throughout his/her stay at national school. Exemption may continue to be granted under the terms of Circular Letter M10/94 for second level schools.
2. The terms Specific Learning Disability does not include disabilities due to poor general intellectual functioning. Account must be taken of the following criteria in determining whether a Specific Learning Disability exists: a. assessed intellectual functioning at average level or above; b. marked failure to achieve expected levels of attainment in basic skills such as reading and writing; c. a history of such failure not related directly to factors such as poor attendance, poor motivation or problems in social interaction which may affect attainment.
3. School managements will be required to observe the following prescribed procedures:
 - A written application for exemption will be made by a parent or guardian to the principal of the school. This application will specify the grounds on which the exemption is sought.
 - The school authorities will satisfy themselves as to the documentary evidence submitted.
 - The school authorities will prepare a full report on the student in consultation with relevant teachers.
 - Where exemption is being sought under sub-paragraph 1(c) above, the parent or guardian will be required to furnish reports from a qualified psychologist and appropriate medical specialist as appropriate
 - A decision to grant exemption will be conveyed to the parent or guardian by way of a written certificate, signed by the school principal, that the exemption has been given in accordance with this Circular. The certificate will also cite the name, address and type of school, the student's name and date of birth, the sub-paragraph under which the exemption is being granted and the specific grounds for exemption. Where the exemption is being granted under sub-paragraph 1(c), the name and address of the qualified psychologist and the date of the psychologist's report and the name of the medical specialist and date of report, if applicable, will be included.
 - The application, school report, psychologist's report, report of medical specialist, copy of certificate of exemption and other relevant documents will be retained by the school and will be made available for inspection by authorised officers of the Department.
 - A copy of the exemption certificate will be given to the parent or guardian of the pupil being exempted .
 - A copy of the exemption certification should be sent to the relevant second level school when the pupil in question has completed her/his primary education.

4. The psychologist's report should be of a full psychological assessment carried out by a qualified psychologist not more than two years prior to the application for exemption. The Department has prepared guidelines on the preparation of these reports which are available to psychologists.
5. The school report should include information on assessments carried out in the school by Learning Support/Resource teachers or other teachers. It should include, as well, the results of tests, reports from relevant teachers, information on the pupil's attendance, application to study and any remedial or other special help given. Samples of the pupil's unaided written expression should also be attached to the report.
6. The operation of the revised circular will be monitored regularly by the Department. The delegated authority to grant exemption may be rescinded in the case of individual schools where circumstances so warrant.

Policy Content:

Before granting an exemption from Irish, the school requires evidence of a specific or general learning disability from a qualified psychologist or in the case of a child with a sensory impairment, from a qualified medical practitioner. Children of nationals of other countries who are resident in the country will also be granted an exemption from Irish, particularly if their grasp of the English language is limited.

Procedures

- The school requires a written application for exemption from the parents/guardians of the particular child. It must be accompanied by documentary evidence such as age, previous schooling etc. and a psychologist's report (if relevant) and a copy of the child's own unaided work in written Irish.
- The Principal in consultation with staff, class teachers and BoM will grant an exemption if warranted and will present a certificate of exemption to the parents in accordance with Circular 12/96. A copy of the exemption certificate will be forwarded to the relevant second level school if the child is in a senior class

Roles and Responsibilities:

In-school Management, class teachers, BoM will contribute to the implementation of school procedures.

Success Criteria:

- Seamless integration of children of other nationalities and pupils with learning difficulties into mainstream classes
- Positive teacher/parental feedback

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 29/1/2019

_____ (Chairman)