



Cahergal N.S.

Scoil Náisiúnta An Chathair Sheal

Roll No: 17807r

Policy on Exemption from the study of Irish

Policy on the Exemption from the Study of Irish

Introduction

This policy explains how Cahergal National School applies the terms of the Department of Education and Skills' Circular 52/19 on the exemption from the study of Irish.

Overview

Irish is a compulsory subject in the primary school curriculum. In rare and exceptional circumstances an exemption to the study of Irish may be sought. An application for such an exemption can be made by the parents or guardians of children who meet the criteria as set out by the Department of Education and Skills.

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to advise parents and guardians, staff and other professionals of the revised arrangements for the exemption of pupils from the study of Irish. It supersedes our previous policy and references to Circular 12/96. Existing exemptions from the study of Irish granted under Circular 12/96 and held by pupils will continue to apply until the end of their post-primary education.

Relationship to School Ethos

We strive to create a secure, happy and caring learning environment where every child has the capacity to reach their full potential. We understand that the needs and circumstances of pupils differ and we aim to meet the requirements of all the students in our school. While we encourage all students to access all areas of the curriculum, we also understand that in rare and exceptional circumstances some children's overall learning may be maximised by granting an exemption from the study of Irish.

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of this policy are:

- to make provisions for all children in our care so that they can access an educational programme most suitable for their needs. **In exceptional circumstances** this may include an exemption from the study of Irish.
- to clarify to parents and guardians the terms of the Department of Education and Skills circular 52/19 on the exemption from the study of Irish.
- to state the exceptional circumstances in which an exemption from the study of Irish may be sought.
- to explain the process of applying for and granting an exemption.
- to explain what the child with an exemption may do when the class teacher is teaching Irish to the rest of the class.
- to inform parents / guardians on how to appeal a decision.

Exceptional circumstances required

Exempting a pupil from the study of Irish is 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 following detailed discussion with the pupil's parent(s)/guardian(s), the class teacher, special education teacher/(s), and the pupil.

Circumstances permitting Irish Exemption

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
- 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 (refer to Appendix 3).

Or

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

Standardised Test Used for Irish Exemption

In Cahergal N.S. the discrete standardised test used is the Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (**WIAT-III**). It is individually administered by a member of the Continuum of Support Team to a child.

The implications of not studying Irish

Parents or guardians seeking an exemption from the study of Irish will be advised to carefully research the possible implications for their child in the future as a result of not studying specific aspects of the Irish language. Choice of third level education courses or careers may be restricted as a result. An Irish language degree course, the direct route to Primary School teaching in state-funded training colleges (though alternative routes into primary school teaching are possible), certain modules of An Garda Síochána training and any linguistically-related careers may be extremely challenging without having studied some aspects of the Irish language. A useful reference website to refer to in relation to further education/third level entry requirements is <https://www.qualifax.ie/>.

Application Procedure

A parent/guardian must make an application in writing to the principal of the school for a Certificate of Exemption from the study of Irish on behalf of a pupil (See Appendix 1).

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 sub-paragraph 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.

Recording the decision

The outcome of the application process will be conveyed by the school principal in writing to the parent(s)/guardian(s). Where an exemption is granted, a **Certificate of Exemption**, signed and dated by the school 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. A hard copy of the certificate will be placed in the child's file, recorded electronically on the school's administration program (Aladdin) and also entered in the Exemption from the study of Irish file in the Principal's office.

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.

If the exemption is not granted, the Principal will explain the reasons for this decision to the parents/ guardians and also provide a written explanation for the rationale behind the decision, a copy of which will also be stored in each of the locations mentioned above.

Appeals Process

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/.

Arrangements for pupils who are exempt from the study of Irish

To support the inclusive practices of our school, it is policy that pupils who are exempt from the study of Irish be allowed to participate in Irish lessons commensurate with their interest/ability. This allows for the pupil to be included in a meaningful way in aspects of Irish language and culture. It provides an opportunity to gain a knowledge of spoken Irish and to participate in any suitable/enjoyable learning activities.

A separate programme of work developed by the class teacher/special education teacher, tailored to meet the specific learning needs of the child, may be followed during the parts of Irish lessons that focus solely on aspects of the Irish language that the child will not benefit

from e.g. the development of English language skills. This work may be carried out independently using a self-correcting program on an electronic device or by following a folder of appropriately graded work prepared by the Class Teacher/Support Teacher.

Children with an Irish exemption are exempt from completing Irish homework.

Reporting on exemptions granted to the D.E.S.

Cahergal N.S. is required to provide statistical information relating to the number and the grounds on which exemptions were granted under Circular 52/2019 in the previous school year as part of the Primary School Annual on the Primary Online Database (POD).

A copy of the Certificate of Exemption is 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.

Monitoring and reviewing the Policy

An initial review of circular 52/2019 will be conducted after the first two years of implementation and periodically thereafter. Cahergal N.S. will review this policy in line with Department of Education and Skills guidelines.

Ratification of policy for Cahergal NS

Chairperson **Date**

Principal **Date**

Appendix 1



Scoil Náisiúnta An Chathair Sheal

Application for the Exemption of the study of Irish

Pupil's Name	
Date of Birth	

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

Please indicate (circle) 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.

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.

2.2c: pupils who have at least reached second class and present with significant and persistent learning difficulties and present with a Standardised Score in a discrete test at/below the 10th percentile in either Word Reading, Reading Comprehension or Spelling.

2.2d: children of foreigners who are diplomatic or consular representatives in Ireland.

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

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

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 COMPLETION BY THE SCHOOL

Date of receipt of application	
Signature of Principal	
Date	