

**St Brendans BNS**

**Artane, Dublin 5**



---

Learning for all, Respect for all

---



**Exemption from Irish**



## Exemption from Irish Policy

### Introduction:

This policy was drafted by staff and Board of Management in response to changes in Special Educational Provisions. The policy is in keeping with the Mission Statement of the school which strives to enhance the self-esteem of all pupils through providing for the intellectual, physical moral and cultural needs of all.

This policy document should be read in conjunction with Circular 0054/22, attached.

### Aims:

- To allow for pupils of differing abilities, interests and circumstances.
- To enhance inclusively within the school.
- To enable children of all abilities to access the curriculum in a learner friendly manner.
- To ensure that parents have the information they need to make an informed decision for their child/children.

It is the policy of St.Brendans Boys National School that even children who may be exempt should sit in on Irish classes, unless the time would be more fruitfully spent on extra tuition in areas of weakness. We believe that children benefit from the study of additional languages and that in general children have an enhanced capacity for language learning, especially in their early years.

Exempting a pupil from the study of Irish should 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 teacher, 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. 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 Circular 0054/2022 (circular attached below).

***An exemption from the study of Irish may be allowed in the following circumstances, 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3, 2.2.4 or 2.2.5 only:***

### **2.2.1 A pupil 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 pupil 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 enrolment<sup>11</sup> or re-enrolment

#### **OR**

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

### **2.2.2 A pupil 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 pupil:

**(i)** who has at least reached second class

#### **AND**

**(ii)** 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**

**(iii)** 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.

Normally, pupils availing of an exemption under this category should be encouraged to engage with the study of oral Irish language for as long as possible in keeping with the integrated approach in the *Primary Language Curriculum* and acknowledging that pupils at a young age adapt and improve over time.

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

It is recognised that there is a small cohort of pupils 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 pupils, 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 pupil:

**(i)** who has at least reached second class

**AND**

**(ii)** 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**

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

**AND**

**(iv)** 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 pupil

**AND**

(v) 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 in the *Primary Language Curriculum* and acknowledging that pupils at a young age adapt and improve over time

## AND

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

Normally, this will mean that the pupil will be expected to engage with the study of Irish at least to the end of fifth class. However, in very exceptional circumstances, where the principal is satisfied that an exemption is warranted to address the high level of multiple and persistent needs of the pupil, and certifies that all of the conditions in (i) to (vi) above have been met, it may be granted at an earlier stage, but in no case may this be earlier than second class.

### **2.2.4 A pupil in a recognised<sup>[2]</sup> special school or class or who was previously enrolled in a recognised special school or class or who has a recommendation<sup>[3]</sup> and has been deemed eligible<sup>[4]</sup> for a place in a recognised special school and/or in a special class in a mainstream school**

(i) Where a pupil 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 pupil is automatically entitled to an exemption from the study of Irish without an application.

## OR

(ii) Where a pupil 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.

Normally, pupils availing of an exemption under (i) OR (ii) of this category should be encouraged to engage with the study of oral Irish language for as long as possible in keeping with the integrated approach in the *Primary Language Curriculum* and acknowledging that pupils at a young age adapt and improve over time.

### **2.2.5 A pupil whose parent(s)/guardian(s) is a/are diplomatic or consular representative(s) of another country to Ireland irrespective of age or educational history**

An exemption from the study of Irish may be granted to a pupil whose parent(s)/guardian(s) is a/are diplomatic or consular representative(s) of another country to Ireland irrespective of age or educational history.

---

<sup>[1]</sup> For the purposes of this Circular where pupils 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.

<sup>[2]</sup> 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

<sup>[3]</sup> The recommendation for the pupil to be placed in a special school or special class meets the specifications for such placement as determined by the NCSE and the pupil has been deemed eligible and/or is awaiting the recommended placement.

<sup>[4]</sup> See Exemptions from the Study of Irish: Guidelines for Primary Schools (English-medium), DE (2022).

**Application for Exemption from the Study of Irish  
Primary Schools  
For completion by the parent(s)/guardian(s)**

|                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Name of Pupil</b>                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |  |
| <b>Date of Birth</b>                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |  |
| <b>Class</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |  |
| <b>Name of School</b>                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |  |
| <p>I/We wish to apply for an exemption from the study of Irish on behalf of _____</p> <p>Please indicate (✓) the grounds for an exemption from the study of Irish in accordance with Circular 0054/2022</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |  |
| <b>2.2.1(a)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                             | The pupil is not less than 12 years of age on the day of their enrolment or re-enrolment whose education was received outside the State (for a minimum period of three consecutive years) where he/she did not have the opportunity to engage in the study of Irish.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |  |
| <b>2.2.1(b)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                             | The pupil's 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 who is enrolling following the completion of the full course of primary education recognised by another State.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |  |
| <b>2.2.2</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                | The pupil has at least reached second class and experiences significant literacy difficulties which are an obstacle to their learning across the curriculum and which are persistent despite having had access to a differentiated approach to language and literacy learning in all subjects/across the curriculum and over time and presents with a standardised score on a discrete test in either Word Reading, Reading Comprehension or Spelling at/below the 10th percentile.                                                                                                                                               |  |
| <b>2.2.3</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                | The pupil has at least reached second class and experiences a high level of multiple and persistent needs, that persist despite targeted and individualised Student Support Plans to address those needs (over not less than two years) and which are a significant barrier to the pupil's participation and engagement in their learning and school life and who been given every reasonable opportunity to participate in the learning of Irish in mainstream classes for as long as possible and the Principal is satisfied that the granting of an exemption is in the overall best interests of the pupil <i>concerned</i> . |  |

|                  |                                                                                                                                                             |  |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| <b>2.2.4(ii)</b> | The pupil 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     |  |
| <b>2.2.5</b>     | The pupil's parent(s)/guardian(s) is a/are diplomatic or consular representatives of another country to Ireland irrespective of age or educational history. |  |

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

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

For the purpose of this application the documentation provided will be assessed, by relevant school personnel and other professionals where necessary, to determine whether there is grounds to grant an exemption from the study of Irish. Tick the box if you wish to proceed.

☐

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

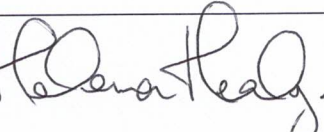
**For school use only**

**Date of receipt of application:**

**Principal:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**School roll number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DOCUMENT HISTORY since 2025**

|                                |                                      |                                                                                                                                       |                                         |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <b>1<sup>st</sup> Version</b>  | Ratified by the Board of Management: | Signed: <br><br>Chairperson,<br>Board of Management | 27 <sup>th</sup> of<br>November<br>2025 |
| <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Version</b>  | Ratified by the Board of Management: | Signed:<br><br>Chairperson,<br>Board of Management                                                                                    |                                         |
| <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Version</b>  | Ratified by the Board of Management: | Signed:<br><br>Chairperson,<br>Board of Management                                                                                    |                                         |
| <b>4<sup>th</sup> Version</b>  | Ratified by the Board of Management: | Signed:<br><br>Chairperson,<br>Board of Management                                                                                    |                                         |
| <b>5<sup>th</sup> VERSION:</b> | Ratified by the Board of Management  | Signed:<br><br>Chairperson,<br>Board of Management                                                                                    |                                         |