

Scoil Mhuire

Roll No: 19497p

**Policy on Exemption from
the study of Irish**

Policy on the Exemption from the Study of Irish

Introduction

This policy explains how Scoil Mhuire applies the terms of the Department of Education and Skills' Circular 54/22 which supersedes 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.

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 54/22 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.

An exemption from the study of Irish may only be allowed in the following circumstances;

- 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 enrolment⁶ or re-enrolment
-

OR

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

1.1.1 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.

1.1.2 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.

This will mean that the pupil will be expected to engage with the study of Irish at least to the end of fifth class.

1.1.3 A pupil 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

- (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.

1.1.4 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.

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).

Formal applications for an exemption from the study of Irish will be considered exclusively during Term 1 of 6th Class; applications submitted prior to this period cannot be accommodated. Pupils from Junior Infants through 5th Class who meet the criteria for an exemption will continue to participate in Irish lessons at a differentiated level. During this time, pupils will be provided with gentle exposure to the language designed to foster engagement and cultivate a love for Irish culture.

Applications will only be considered for pupils that are enrolled in Scoil Mhuire at the time of application. Under no circumstances will exemptions from the study of Irish be granted to past pupils of Scoil Mhuire.

Considering an application for exemption

The school 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 subparagraph 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 school's written refusal was issued. The decision of the school was notified to the parent(s)/guardian(s).

9. Explain to the parent(s) guardian(s) [and student if applicable] 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

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.

St. Mary's N.S. is required to provide statistical information relating to the number and the grounds on which exemptions were granted under Circular 54/2022 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.

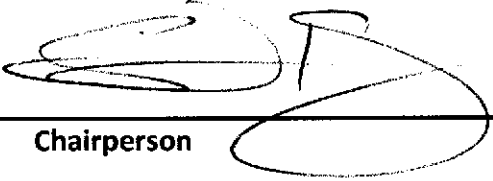
Pupils transitioning to other schools

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 54/2022 will be conducted after the first two years of implementation and periodically thereafter. St. Mary's N.S. will review this policy in line with Department of Education and Skills guidelines.

Ratification of policy for St. Mary's NS

	<u>29/9/26</u>
Chairperson	Date
	<u>29/9/26</u>
Principal	Date

Appendix 1. Application for the exemption to study 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 0054/2022.

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	

Appendix 1

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 0054/2022.

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	

