



Exemption from Irish Policy

1. Introduction:

This policy was drafted by staff and Board of Management of St. Mary's Boys' National School.

Rationale:

Circular 0052/2019 advises Primary Schools of the revised arrangements for the exemption of pupils from the study of Irish. The language component of the Primary Curriculum is for all pupils and comprises both English and Irish. In exceptional circumstances, some pupils may be granted an exemption from the study of Irish.

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 allow for pupils of differing abilities, interests and circumstances
- To enhance inclusivity within the school
- To enable children of all abilities to access the curriculum in a learner friendly manner

2. Policy Content:

Granting an exemption from the study of Irish

2.1 An exemption should be granted only in exceptional circumstances

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. A decision to grant an exemption should only be considered in the circumstances set out in section 2.2 below.

2.2 The circumstances in which a pupil may be granted an exemption from the study of Irish

Exemption from Irish Policy

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.*

Or

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

2.3 Procedures for granting an exemption from the study of Irish

A parent/guardian must make an application in writing [using Appendix A] to the principal of the school for a Certificate of Exemption from the study of Irish on behalf of a pupil.

a) *Considering an application for exemption*

The principal will:

Exemption from Irish Policy

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 (Appendix B).
3. Discuss the written application with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and confirm the sub-paragraph on which the application is based (2.2a, 2.2b, 2.2c or 2.2d) 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.
10. Use the Quick Guide and Checklists ([Appendix 3 and 4 from Exemptions from the Study of Irish: Guidelines for Primary Schools](#)) to guide the processing of applications in the case of the relevant sub paragraph in Section 2.2 of Circular 0052/2019.
11. Convey the outcome of the application in writing to the parent/guardian.
12. Make arrangements for the retention of the application form and all supporting documentation, including a copy of the Certificate of Exemption ([Appendix 5 from Exemptions from the Study of Irish: Guidelines for Primary Schools](#)) where applicable, and the Checklist in accordance with data protection law.

b) 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.

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.

2.4 Appeal

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

Exemption from Irish Policy

Committee (IEAC) (see Appendix C for *Appeal Form*). 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 Circular 0052/2019 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/

Roles and Responsibilities:

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

Success Criteria:

Seamless integration of non-nationals and pupils with learning difficulties

- Happy school learning environment
- Positive teacher/parental feedback

Ratification:

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 6th October 2020.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

Appendix A

Application for Exemption from the Study of Irish Primary Schools	
For completion by the parent(s)/guardian(s)	
Name of pupil	
Date of birth	
Class	
Name of school	
I/We wish to apply for an exemption from the study of Irish on behalf of _____.	
Please indicate (✓) 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 an opportunity to engage in the study of Irish.	<input type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.2d: children of foreigners who are diplomatic or consular representatives in Ireland.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please provide detail of any supporting documentation being submitted to the school	
1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____	
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 the school Date of receipt of application: _____	
Principal: _____ Date: _____ School Roll Number: _____	

Appendix B



St. Mary's Boys' National School

Ferrybank, Waterford.

Phone: 051 851399 Principal: James Robinson

Roll No: 18235D, Web: www.ferrybankbns.ie Email: admin@ferrybankbns.ie

**School's Acknowledgment of Receipt of
Irish exemption Letter of Application**

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

St. Mary's BNS acknowledges receipt of your **application for an Exemption from Irish** on _____ (enter date school received the application here) and in line with Circular 0052/2019, confirm that this application is based on sub-paragraph [please tick the relevant criteria]

2.2.a **2.2b** **2.2c** **2.2d**

Your application will be processed and the outcome confirmed in writing in the next 21 days (from receipt of the application).

A signed **Certificate of Exemption** will issue where a decision is reached that an exemption from the study of Irish may be granted.

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). For more information on this appeals process, please refer to the School's Irish Exemption policy which can be viewed on our school website - www.ferrybankbns.ie or by clicking on the following link - <https://www.education.ie/en/Parents/Information/Irish-Exemption/exemptions-from-the-study-of-irish-guidelines-for-primary-schools.pdf>

Yours sincerely,

James Robinson

Principal

Appendix C

IRISH EXEMPTIONS APPEAL FORM (PRIMARY) Circular 0052/2019	
Name of pupil	
Date of birth	
Name of school	
School address	
School roll number	
Name of Appellant	
Relationship to student	
Address of Appellant	
Email of Appellant	
Please indicate (✓) the sub-paragraph in Circular 0052/2019 on which the application to the school was based.	
2.2a: 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.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.2b: pupils who were previously enrolled as recognised pupils in primary school 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.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.2c: pupils who 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.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.2d: children of foreigners who are diplomatic or consular representatives in Ireland.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Exemption from Irish Policy

Date of application to the school for an exemption from the study of Irish:

Date of written confirmation of the school's decision not to grant an exemption:

Please state the rationale for this appeal emphasising where the school did not follow the process as outlined in Circular 0052/2019:

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____

Please return this Form to : Irish Exemption Appeals, Department of Education, Cornamaddy, Athlone, Co Westmeath

All personal data collected on this form is in accordance with the law on Data Protection and will only be used for the purposes of the Appeal regarding the individual student.

Further information in relation to the Departments policy on Data Protection is available on the Department's website here: <https://www.education.ie/en/The-Department/Data-Protection/gdpr/>

Outcome of Appeal (For Official Use only) :

Please ensure you fully complete this form. Do not include any additional documentation as it will be returned to you under GDPR. All documentation used in the Appeal deliberations will be requested from the school.