

Irish Exemption Policy

Introduction:

As per Circular 0052/2019, *“In the case of pupils in special schools and in special classes in mainstream schools, and in recognising the authority devolved to the management authorities in decision making concerning the Irish language learning needs of the pupils concerned, a formal application for a Certificate of Exemption is not required. Pupils in special schools and in special classes in mainstream schools will therefore be exempt without holding a Certificate of Exemption. In line with the Department’s policy above however, schools are expected and encouraged to provide all pupils, to the greatest extent possible and in a meaningful way, with opportunities to participate in Irish language and cultural activities at a level appropriate to their learning needs.”* This policy seeks to clarify what this looks like in Saplings Special School for Children with Autism and Complex Needs, Kill.

Rationale:

The formulation of this policy enables our school to effectively:

- Meet its requirements in line with Circular 0052/2019
- Ensure that every child is accessing the curriculum in a broad, balanced and appropriate way and at a level that is appropriate to their learning needs.
- Encourage participation in cultural activities including Irish language and Irish cultural activities.

How do we ensure that we “provide all pupils, to the greatest extent possible and in a meaningful way, with opportunities to participate in Irish language and cultural activities at a level appropriate to their learning needs”?

- Using a themed approach e.g. Nollaig activities at Christmas Time, celebrating Nollaig na mBan, wearing green for St. Patrick’s Day and incorporating language, music, art, and drama into these themed approaches.
- Using story time to teach Irish cultural stories and myths and follow on activities related to these myths through language lessons, as appropriate.
- Teaching Irish cultural songs and Irish language songs during music lessons as appropriate.
- Teaching Irish dancing, Gaelic football and hurling during PE as appropriate.
- Teaching Irish cultural stories and myths during drama and art lessons as appropriate.
- Weaving Irish historical stories and myths into SESE lessons as appropriate.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The overall responsibility for the day to day management of the school rests with the Principal. The class teacher is responsible for classroom supervision and the implementation of all policies including the Irish exemption policy. The Board is responsible for ensuring that policies are up to date and that they reflect current practice in the classrooms.

School Ethos:

This policy reinforces the elements of the school vision which advocates providing a happy, safe, holistic learning environment for each member of the school community, allowing each student to reach his/ her full potential through appropriately supported and resourced evidence based teaching and learning.

Ratification:

This revised policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management in February 2020. It is envisaged that this policy will be reviewed in 2023, or should a newer circular which supersedes 0052/2019 arise.

Ratified by Board of Management on: _____

Signed (chairperson): _____