



## Exemption from Irish Policy 2019

### Introduction:

This policy was drafted by staff and Board of Management of St. Christopher's Primary School in response to recent changes in special educational provisions (*see Circular 52 Exemptions from the Study of Irish: Guidelines for Primary Schools*).

### 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:

1. To allow for pupils of differing abilities, interests and circumstances.
2. To enhance inclusivity within the school.
3. To enable children of all abilities to access the curriculum in a learner friendly manner.
4. To ensure that our procedures comply with Circular 0052/2019.

### 1. Granting an exemption from the study of Irish

#### 1.1. 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 2.3 to 2.5 below.

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

Exemption from the study of Irish may be allowed in the following exceptional circumstances only:

- 1.3. 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**

**1.4.** 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**

**1.5.** pupils who:

1.5.1. have at least reached second class

**And**

1.5.2. 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.
- 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**

**1.6.** children of diplomatic or consular representatives in Ireland.

## **2. Procedures for granting an exemption from the study of Irish**

**2.1.** A parent/guardian must make an application in writing [using the form in **Appendix A**] to the Principal of the school for a *Certificate of Exemption from the study of Irish* on behalf of a pupil. The Principal will:

- Ensure that the date of receipt of the application by the school is recorded on the form.
- Acknowledge receipt of the application for exemption from the study of Irish in writing [see **Appendix B**].
- Discuss the written application with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and confirm the sub-paragraph on which the application is based (**2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6** above) as soon as practicable following receipt of a written application.
- Advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the next steps in processing the application.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

- 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).
- Explain to the parent(s)/guardian(s) the arrangements for the pupil's learning in the case of an exemption being granted.

**2.2.** Recording of the decision and the outcome of the application process will be conveyed by the school Principal in writing to the parent(s)/guardian(s).

**2.3.** Where an exemption is granted, a Certificate of Exemption will be issued; it will be signed and dated by the school Principal. 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.

**2.4.** 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.

## **Appeal**

**2.5.** 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.

**2.6.** 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](http://www.education.ie/en/Parents/Information/Irish-Exemption)

## **3. Roles and Responsibilities:**

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

## **4. Success Criteria:**

- Successful integration of new international pupils and pupils with learning difficulties.
- A considered and transparent approach to the granting of exemptions is established.
- Clarity for teaching staff, parents and children regarding exemptions from Irish is established.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal

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

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

Date of next review: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix A

### Letter of Application for Exemption from Irish

Please complete the following form if you consider that your child is entitled to an exemption from Irish (after consultation with the School Principal). By filling in this form, it is understood that the documentation provided may be reviewed for the purpose of processing this application by the relevant school personnel and other professionals where necessary.

Name of Pupil \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Class Level \_\_\_\_\_

Children are only eligible for an exemption from 2<sup>nd</sup> class upwards (unless applying under criterion 2.6)

**Eligibility: See details of criteria below.**

Please indicate which of the following applies to your child:

**PLEASE TICK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING**

2.3     2.4     2.5     2.6

In order to qualify for an exemption from the study of Irish your child will need to fulfil one of the following requirements:

Exemption from the study of Irish may be allowed in the following exceptional circumstances only:

**2.3** 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

**2.4** 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

**2.5** pupils who:

have at least reached 2<sup>nd</sup> Class

**And**

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.
- 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.

**2.6** children of diplomatic or consular representatives in Ireland.

We have discussed this matter with \_\_\_\_\_ [Insert Principal's Name] and have been made aware that:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ [Insert Pupil's Name], may, into the future, be restricted from certain jobs where Irish may be a requirement and that there may be other longer-term, as yet unforeseen, implications (e.g. while in post-primary education)
2. The school's goal is to maximise the child's participation and enjoyment in Irish oral language and to ensure he/she feels part of the Irish culture and ethos of the school, thereby increasing the likelihood of him/her being able to re-engage with Irish in the future.

Yours sincerely,

<p><i>For Office Use Only:</i></p> <p>Date Application received by _____</p> <p>SIGNED _____</p>
--

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parents' Signature(s)

## Appendix B

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

Dear *Parent(s)/Guardian(s)*

St. Christopher's Primary School acknowledges receipt of your ***Irish exemption Letter of Application*** on \_\_\_\_\_ (*enter date school received the application here*) and in line with the School's Policy confirm that this application is based on sub-paragraph [*please tick the relevant criteria*]

2.3

2.4

2.5

2.6

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.

Yours faithfully,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal



St. Christopher's Primary School

**CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION FROM THE STUDY OF IRISH**

**Name of school:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Roll Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of pupil:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of birth:** \_\_\_\_\_

*I certify that the above-named pupil has been granted an exemption from the study of Irish in primary schools in accordance with the terms of Circular 0052/2019*

*The exemption has been granted on the following grounds: [please tick the relevant criteria]*

2.3    2.4    2.5    2.6 (see exemption policy)

*Any further information (if relevant):*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal Teacher

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

**Please note:**

- *Where appropriate and where possible, St. Christopher's Primary School, Haddington Road, will endeavour to take account of the literacy learning needs of pupils who are exempt from the study of Irish when deploying available special educational needs resources.*
- *To support inclusive practices, a pupil who is exempt from the study of Irish will be included in a meaningful way in aspects of Irish language and cultural activities in line with his/her ability and interests.*
- *Parent(s)/Guardian(s)/Pupil(s) always retain the option not to exercise the exemption granted, without any loss of the right to exercise it at a future time.*
- *Please keep this certificate safe as it is the responsibility of parent(s)/guardian(s) to ensure that a copy of this certificate is made available to any school to which their child enrolls.*
- *An exemption granted to a pupil may be operative throughout his/her enrolment in primary and post-primary school.*