



Powerstown Educate Together National School

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Exemption from Irish

Policy 1.1 – c52/2019

This policy has been formulated by Powerstown ETNS to assist parent, guardians, teachers and other professionals understand the criteria outlined by the Department of Education and Skills to grant an exemption from Irish for a pupil under circular 52/2019

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Policy Introduction

This policy has been set out in accordance with the provisions set out in [Circular 52/2019](#), **EXEMPTIONS FROM THE STUDY OF IRISH REVISING CIRCULAR 12/96**.

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. It supersedes our previous policy and references to Circular 12/96.

Existing exemptions from the study of Irish granted under Circular 12/96 and held by pupils will continue to apply until the end of their post-primary education.

Irish exemptions recorded on Aladdin for DES

The Language component of the Primary Curriculum is for all pupils and comprises both Irish and English. In exceptional circumstances, some pupils may be granted an exemption from the study of Irish. In order for pupils who are exempt from the study of Irish to be recognised when the Department validates school enrolment returns for grant payment and teacher allocation purposes, schools will continue to be required to record data on pupils who are exempt from the study of Irish and the reason for that exemption on the [Primary Online Database \(POD\)](#).

Principles of Policy

This policy reflects the aims of [circular 52/2019](#) to support schools in addressing a wide diversity of needs by providing a differentiated learning experience for pupils in an inclusive school environment. It is informed by the benefits of bilingualism for all pupils, as well as the principles of inclusion that underpin the *Primary Language Curriculum*.

Special classes in Powerstown ETNS

Powerstown ETNS promotes the inclusive education of children with special educational needs in mainstream education. We have three specialised classes in Powerstown ETNS; Holly, Hawthorn and Birch.

In the case of pupils in these special classes in Powerstown ETNS, in line with circular 52/2019 a formal application for a Certificate of Exemption **is not required**. Pupils in our special classes will therefore be exempt without holding a Certificate of Exemption.

In line with the Department's policy, Powerstown ETNS provides 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.

Granting an exemption from the study of Irish

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 teachers, and the pupil.

A decision to grant an exemption is only considered in the circumstances set out below.

Circumstances permitting Irish Exemption

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 (refer to Appendix 3).

Or

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

Standardised Test Used for Irish Exemption

In Powerstown ETNS the discrete standardised test used is the Wide Range Attainment Test, Fifth Edition (WRAT 5). It is individually administered by a member of the Continuum of Support Team to a child.

Implications of an Irish Exemption and inclusive nature of Powerstown ETNS

It is important that parents/guardians educate themselves in relation to the implications of their child having an Irish Exemption.

A useful reference website to refer to in relation to further education/third level entry requirements is <https://www.qualifax.ie/>. It is recommended parents explore this site to identify how an Irish exemption may restrict their child's educational opportunities in the future.

If your child is granted an Irish Exemption, they may be restricted from certain jobs where Irish may be a requirement, and there may be other longer-term, as yet unforeseen, implications.

Therefore the school's goal is to maximise the child's participation and enjoyment in Irish oral language and to ensure the child feels part of the Irish culture and ethos of the school, thereby increasing the likelihood of your child being able to re-engage with Irish in the future.

The school strongly encourages all children to participate in Gaeilge lessons for the duration of their primary education. This ensures your child will have basic Gaeilge skills leaving primary school and enables the child and parents to make an informed and educated decision in relation to Irish exemption when child transfers to Secondary School and prior to child sitting state exams.

Procedures for granting an exemption from the study of Irish

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).

Considering an application for exemption

The principal 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 sub-paragraph 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 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.

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.

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 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 remain in the class during the Irish lesson. This allows for the pupil to be included in a meaningful way in aspects of Irish language and cultural activities in line with his/her ability and interests. It provides an opportunity to gain a knowledge of spoken Irish and to participate in the learning activities.

Powerstown ETNS will take account of the literacy learning needs of pupils who are exempt from the study of Irish when deploying available special educational needs resources.

Only under exceptional circumstances, will other suitable arrangement may be made such as allocating school work on other subject areas.

- In such exceptional circumstances, a Continuum of Support (COS) plan will indicate that child's needs impede his/her ability to learn Irish and therefore participate in Irish lessons
- Extra work will be assigned collaboratively by Class teacher and COS teacher for the child
- Withdrawal of the child during Irish lessons is detailed in child's COS plan

Children with an Irish exemption are exempt from completing Irish homework.

Supports for pupils who have no understanding of English when enrolled

A pupil who has no understanding of English when enrolled and whose education up to 12 years of age or up to the final year of his/her primary education was received outside the state, are provided with intensive English as an Additional Language (EAL) in preparation for his/her full engagement with the *Primary Language Curriculum* at a level commensurate with his/her ability.

Reporting on exemptions granted to the Department

Powerstown ETNS is required to provide statistical information relating to the number and the grounds on which exemptions were granted under Circular 52/2019 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 to 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 52/2019 will be conducted after the first two years of implementation and periodically thereafter. Powerstown ETNS will review this policy in line with Department of Education and Skills guidelines.



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Appendix 1: Exemption from Irish Application.

1. Child's Name:		2. Child's DOB:	
		Please include documentary evidence of age	
3. Ground on which exemption is sought:			
TICK	Reason Exemption Sought		
	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 <i>Evidence of same included</i>		
	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 <i>Evidence of same included</i>		
	pupils who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. have at least reached second class 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 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 (refer to Appendix 3) <i>Evidence of same included</i>		
	children of foreigners who are diplomatic or consular representatives in Ireland. <i>Evidence of same included</i>		
Parents/Guardian 1:		Signature:	
Parents/Guardian 2:		Signature:	
		Date:	

PETNS Irish Exemption Application: FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY:

Pupil Name:	Pupil DOB:
Date application received:	Signed by Principal:
Acknowledgement of application sent to parents: YES / NO	
<i>Date and details of discussion of the written application with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and confirmation of the sub-paragraph (a,b,c, or d) on which the application is based as soon as practicable following receipt of a written application.</i>	
DATE:	A,B,C or D:
Parent(s)/guardian(s)/pupil informed regarding any implication of an exemption from the study of Irish for the student while in post-primary education and into the future. YES / NO	
Parent(s)/guardian(s) informed that the application will be processed and the outcome confirmed in writing within 21 school days of receipt of the application. YES / NO	
Parent(s)/guardian(s) informed that a signed Certificate of Exemption will issue where a decision is reached that an exemption from the study of Irish may be granted. YES / NO	
Parent(s)/guardian(s) informed 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). YES / NO	
Parent(s)/guardian(s) informed of the arrangements for the pupil's learning in the case of an exemption being granted. YES / NO	
Parents/guardians and pupils informed of the option not to exercise the exemption granted, without any loss of the right to exercise it at a future time. YES / NO	
Parents/Guardians informed where the application for exemption from the study of Irish is refused, an appeal of the school's decision can be made to the Irish Exemptions Appeal Committee (IEAC). YES / NO	
Parents/guardians informed that 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). YES / NO	
Principal Signature:	Date
Parents/guardians signature:	Date



Appendix 2: CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION

Name of school: Powerstown Educate Together National School

Address: Powerstown Road, Tyrrelstown, D15VR80

Roll Number: 20384J

Name of pupil: _____

PPS Number: _____

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 52/2019.

The exemption has been granted on the following grounds (Please delete as appropriate)

- 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
- 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
- c. pupils who:
 - have at least reached second class
 - 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 (refer to Appendix 3)
- d. children of foreigners who are diplomatic or consular representatives in Ireland.

Signed: _____
Principal Teacher

Date: _____

Appendix 3: Guidance on the selection of discrete tests of literacy attainment in English Exemption from the Study of Irish

Circulars 0052/2019 (Primary) and 0053/2019 (Post Primary)

pupils who:

- *have at least reached second class*
 - *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 (refer to Appendix 3)*
-
- For the purpose of the criteria set out in the above circulars, testing of literacy skills should be undertaken using a discrete test. A discrete test is a standalone test which assesses a single literacy skill – in this case a test of either Word Reading or Reading Comprehension or Spelling.
 - Selected tests must measure attainment level as a standardised score which can be expressed as a percentile rank.
 - When selecting a test, schools should use the most recent version of the test and the test should be normed for the appropriate age range.

- Further guidance to schools on test selection is available in the resource **Effective Interventions for struggling readers**: https://www.education.ie/en/Education-Staff/Information/NEPS-Literacy-Resource/neps_literacy_good_practice_guide.pdf. This resource contains a chapter on *Assessment and Measuring Progress* as well as a number of Appendices, which may be helpful to teachers when considering eligibility for Irish Exemption. Two appendices are reproduced here:
 - Appendix 15 Understanding Tests and Test results
 - Appendix 16 Tests of Literacy Currently in Use.
- Further information for schools may also be found in Circular 0035/2017.
- If using online testing, schools must comply with data protection law.

Schools should be mindful of the need to adhere to the criteria in the Circular and note that an attainment score is just one element of the criteria required when considering an application. The school must also be satisfied that the identified significant learning difficulties are persistent despite targeted intervention as set out above.

Examples of discrete tests which schools may consider include the following (this list is not prescriptive but is intended to provide examples of suitable tests which SET teachers may currently be using within).

Word Reading	Reading Comprehension	Spelling
Wide Range Attainment Test (WRAT) 4/5 Word Reading	WRAT 4/5 Reading Comprehension	WRAT 4/5 WIAT 3
Wechsler Individual Attainment Test 3(WIAT 3 - teachers) Word reading	WIAT 3(teachers) Word reading	Vernon The Diagnostic Spelling Test
Woodcock Johnson IV	York Assessment of Reading Comprehension - YARK (primary norms)	British Spelling Test 2 nd edition
Woodcock Reading Mastery Test 3 rd Edition (WRMT-III) (2011)	YARC (post primary norms) Woodcock Johnson IV	

NOTE: This guidance note will be reviewed periodically.