

Borrisokane Community College Exemption from the Study of Irish Policy

Relationship to the school Ethos:

This policy is in keeping with the mission statement of the school which seeks to promote a caring and committed school community which facilitates the education of all our students.

Aims and Objectives:

1. To allow for students of differing abilities, interests, and circumstances.
2. To enhance inclusion within the school and to streamline the full integration of all
3. To comply with guidelines given in Circular Letter 53/19

Categories of students eligible:

The grounds for making an application for exemption from the study of Irish are listed in Section 2.2 of Circular 0053/2019 which sets out the exceptional circumstances in which consideration may be given to granting a student an exemption from the study of Irish. These are:

- a. students whose education up to 12 years of age (or up to 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. students who were previously enrolled as recognised students in a primary or post- 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,
- c. i. students who 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
 1. regular reviews of learning needs as part of an ongoing cycle of assessment
 2. target-setting
 3. evidence-informed intervention and review, including test scores (word reading, reading comprehension, spelling, other scores of language/literacy) at key points of review.and
- ii. 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**.

Granting an exemption from the study of Irish

A written application for an exemption is made by the parent or guardian to the school principal on behalf of their child or the student themselves if they are over 18. The application should state the reasons why the exemption is being sought and a form is provided for this (Appendix 1). The student must meet one of the criteria mentioned above.

In deciding whether to grant or refuse an exemption, the Principal will, as relevant, consult with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student on whose behalf the application is being made, or the student where he/she is the applicant, and relevant school personnel in order to satisfy himself/herself that all key evidence has been assessed.

A meeting will take place with the Principal, SENCO or relevant Special Education Teacher (SET), parents and students. The consequences of an exemption from Irish will be explained to parents and student. Parents will be given a copy of all relevant documentation.

Students attending ASD centre

In line with Circular 0053/2019, a formal application for a Certificate of Exemption is not required for students attending the ASD centre. Pupils in the ASD classes in Borrisokane Community College will therefore be exempt without holding a Certificate of Exemption if that is what they and their parents wish. Students will be issued with a formal exemption certificate if moving to mainstream education. The consequences of being exempt from Irish will be communicated to both parents and students before this is issued. Students in the ASD centre will be allowed to continue to study Irish if this is appropriate to their needs.

Processing the application for exemption from the study of Irish

The school principal, on behalf of the school's board of management, processes applications received by the school for a Certificate of Exemption from the study of Irish after they have been reviewed by the Special Educational Needs Coordinator or relevant SET. The formal written application submitted by the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student must indicate the exceptional circumstance that forms the basis for the application in accordance with criteria explained above.

In considering the application 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)/student and confirm the criteria on which the application is based as soon as practicable following receipt of a written application.
4. Advise the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student of the next steps in processing the application.
5. Inform the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student 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)/student 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)/student 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)/student that, where an application is refused, the reason(s) as to why it was refused; and 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 in writing to the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student.
9. Explain to the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student, and the student on whose behalf the application has been made, the arrangements for the student's learning in the case of an exemption being granted.
10. Use the provided Quick Guide and Checklists (Appendix 2 and Appendix 3) to guide the processing of applications in the case of the relevant sub-paragraph in Section 2.2 of the Circular.
11. Convey the outcome of the application in writing to the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student.
12. Make arrangements for the retention of the application form and all supporting documentation, including a copy of the Certificate of Exemption (Appendix 4) where applicable, and the Checklist in accordance with data protection law.

Appeals procedure?

Where an application for an exemption from the study of Irish is refused, the parent(s)/guardian(s)/student, may appeal the decision not to grant an exemption to the Irish Exemptions Appeal Committee within 30 calendar days from the date on which the school's decision was notified in writing (Appendix 5). The appeal will be confined to a review of whether the school adhered to the guidelines for processing the application for exemption as set out in the Circular.

This written appeal should contain the specific reason(s) why the decision is being appealed by the applicant and the circumstances in which it is considered that the process has not been correctly applied.

A parent/guardian/ student who is unhappy with the outcome of the appeal to the Irish Exemptions Appeal Committee will have recourse to the offices of the Ombudsman for Children if the student on whose behalf the application is made is under 18 years of age, or to the Ombudsman.

Record keeping / Reporting

All documentation concerning the application and processing process will be maintained in the Principal's Exemption File as relevant and be available for review by authorised Department of Education and Skills officials. The Principal will report relevant information concerning Irish exemptions to the Department of Education and Skills.

Arrangements for students who are exempt from the study of Irish

Where a student has been granted an exemption from Irish due to learning needs they shall attend support classes to address their learning needs. If a student is granted an exemption on other grounds they will remain in the Irish class and study where possible.

Sharing information of student's Certificate of Exemption between schools

It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) or the student (where he/she is the applicant) to ensure that a copy of the student's Certificate of Exemption is made available to Borrisokane Community College on enrolment into the school.

Further Information and Guidance:

Further information including Application Forms, Guidance Information, and Appeals Form can be found on the Department of Education & Skills website at this link:

<https://www.education.ie/en/Parents/Information/Irish-Exemption/>

APPENDIX 1: APPLICATION FORM FOR EXEMPTION FROM THE STUDY OF IRISH
Application for Exemption from the Study of Irish Post-Primary Schools

For completion by the parent(s)/guardian(s) on behalf of a student or a student who has reached 18 years of age

Name of student: _____

Date of birth: _____

Year: _____

Name of school: _____

I/We wish to apply for an exemption from the study of Irish on behalf of _____ or I _____ (student who has reached 18 years) wish to apply for an exemption from the study of Irish. Please indicate () the ground for applying for an exemption from the study of Irish in accordance with Circular 0053/2019

2.2a: Students 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: Students who were previously enrolled as a recognised students in a primary or post 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.

2.2c: Students 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.

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: _____