St. Brendan's College
Coláiste Bhreandáin, Belmullet, Co. Mayo

English as an Additional Language (EAL) Policy 2025

Chairperson Board of Management:	Secretary Board of Management:
Terrence Mc Guire	Michael Walshe
Ratified by Board of Management:	14/05/25.
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School Philosophy:

At Saint Brendan's College, we are dedicated to fostering the development of the whole person, encouraging the pursuit of knowledge, personal responsibility, and respect for others. Our school aims to be a student friendly, student cantered, safe and a pleasant place to be. It will be your home away from home for a considerable amount of time each day. Our ethos values integrity, community, and compassion. We believe in the inherent worth of every individual, regardless of background, and our school environment is welcoming to all students, irrespective of economic circumstance, gender, religious or philosophical outlook, race, or social situation.

In our inclusive learning environment, we support students to become responsible and respectful citizens, guided by the principles of justice, truth, and care. We value our culture, traditions, and heritage, and seek to provide a nurturing and compassionate community. This is reflected in our commitment to celebrating diversity and supporting all students in achieving their full potential.

Introductory Statement:

This policy provides a framework for the delivery of English as an Additional Language (EAL) at Saint Brendan's College, Belmullet. It serves as a guide for staff, students, and parents, ensuring consistency and quality in EAL provision while allowing flexibility to meet individual student needs. The objective is to equip EAL students with the confidence and competence to use English as a tool for learning across all subjects and to integrate successfully into the school community.

Rationale:

Saint Brendan's College recognises the importance of supporting students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. We understand that English may not be the first language for many students, and it is our mission to help these students develop both socially and academically. EAL support enables students whose first language or language of the home is not English to realise their full potential, contributing to their academic success and overall development within the school system.

Aims and Objectives

At Saint Brendan's College, we are committed to:

1. Providing High-Quality EAL Support: Ensuring that all students for whom English is an additional language receive appropriate teaching and resources to support their language development.

2. Promoting Academic Success: Helping EAL students develop the language skills necessary to succeed in all curriculum areas.

3. Encouraging Integration: Supporting students to feel part of the school community, facilitating their social and emotional development alongside academic achievement.

4. Respecting Diversity: Valuing the cultural, linguistic, and social backgrounds of all students, and fostering an inclusive environment where diversity is celebrated.

5. Individualised Learning: Tailoring EAL support to meet the specific needs of each student, ensuring that they receive the help required to progress in their language acquisition and academic subjects.

6. Collaboration: Encouraging effective communication and collaboration among EAL staff, subject teachers, parents, and students, to support the ongoing progress of EAL learners.

Guidelines for Implementation:

1. Assessment and Identification: Upon entry to the school, students whose first language is not English will be assessed to determine their proficiency in English. This will help identify the level of support required.

2. EAL Provision: EAL students will receive targeted support from trained EAL staff, who will work alongside subject teachers to provide differentiated teaching methods and resources tailored to the students' language abilities.

3. Curriculum Integration: EAL support will be designed to complement the wider curriculum, ensuring that language development is integrated across all subject areas. Teachers will work collaboratively to adapt lesson plans to support EAL learners.

4. Language Development: The school will focus on building students' proficiency in all aspects of language, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing. This will help students participate fully in all school activities, both academic and extracurricular.

5. Parental and Community Involvement: We value the support of parents and the wider community in helping EAL students succeed. Regular communication with parents will ensure that they are informed of their child's progress and can support their learning at home.

6. Ongoing Professional Development: Teachers will receive regular training on strategies for supporting EAL students and fostering an inclusive classroom environment.

Monitoring and Review:

The effectiveness of the EAL policy will be regularly monitored by the school's management team. Regular reviews will assess whether the objectives are being met and

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if any adjustments are needed. Feedback from students, parents, and teachers will be incorporated to ensure the best possible outcomes for EAL learners.

Aims of the EAL Policy at Saint Brendan's College, Belmullet:

At Saint Brendan's College, we aim to create a nurturing and inclusive environment where all students, regardless of their linguistic or cultural background, are supported to achieve their full potential. We understand that EAL (English as an Additional Language) students bring a wealth of diverse experiences and talents to our school, and we are committed to helping them integrate, succeed, and thrive within the Saint Brendan's College community.

Our aims are as follows:

1. ### Identify individual EAL learner's needs:

   At Saint Brendan's College, we believe that each student is unique and deserving of personalised support. We aim to identify the specific language, cultural, and academic needs of every EAL student from the outset. Through assessments such as the Cambridge Placement Test and ongoing teacher observations, we will ensure that we fully understand each student's proficiency level in English, as well as their learning strengths and areas for development. This enables us to provide targeted support to ensure every student's academic progress and personal growth.

2. ### Recognise the talents and skills EAL learners bring to the school:
   We value and celebrate the diversity that our EAL students bring to Saint Brendan's College. Each student contributes unique perspectives, talents, and skills that enrich our school community. Whether it's language skills, cultural knowledge, or previous educational experiences, we recognize the value of these contributions and seek to incorporate them into the classroom and school environment. By encouraging students to share their talents and cultural backgrounds, we create a school culture where diversity is celebrated, and all students feel valued.

3. ### Respond to the needs of the EAL learner and place students on the continuum of support:
   At Saint Brendan's College, we understand that EAL students have varying levels of language proficiency, and as such, we aim to respond to these differing needs with appropriate support. After conducting assessments, such as the Cambridge Placement Test, we will place each EAL student on the Continuum of Support. This allows us to ensure that students receive the correct level of intervention and differentiation in their learning. Whether a student requires intensive English language support or is ready for more independent learning, we tailor our approach to ensure their success.

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4. **Support EAL learners in accessing and engaging with the school curriculum:**
   At Saint Brendan's College, our goal is to ensure that all EAL students can fully access and participate in the National Irish Curriculum. We provide support to help students develop both their English language skills and their understanding of the academic content in all subject areas. Teachers at Saint Brendan's College work collaboratively to adapt lessons, materials, and assessments to meet the needs of EAL learners, ensuring they can engage with the curriculum effectively. This support ensures that students not only improve their English but also excel in their overall academic development.

5. **Raise the achievement of EAL students by promoting ethnic, cultural, and social diversity:**

   As a school deeply rooted in Belmullet and committed to fostering an inclusive and respectful community, Saint Brendan's College aims to raise the academic achievement of EAL students while also promoting and celebrating ethnic, cultural, and social diversity. We believe that learning is enriched when students are encouraged to understand and respect the diverse cultures represented in the school. By embracing this diversity, we aim to raise awareness and promote a more inclusive learning environment where EAL students feel empowered to contribute and excel, both academically and socially. We encourage cross-cultural exchanges through projects, events, and school activities, allowing students to build stronger connections with their peers and enhance their sense of belonging within the school community.

Identification of Pupils Requiring Language Support:

At St. Brendan's College, we understand that accurately assessing the language proficiency of students upon arrival can be challenging. However, we have developed several strategies to identify and support students who require additional language assistance. These methods ensure that we can effectively determine each student's needs and provide the right level of support.

Methods of Identification:

- **Record Keeping**: A list of students for whom English is not their primary language is maintained in the school's administration office. This allows us to track and monitor the language needs of all enrolled EAL students.

- **Teacher Observations and Initial Assessments**: Classroom teachers, alongside the learning support department, assess students' English proficiency based on their day-to-day interactions, tasks, and classroom performance. This

observation helps us gauge each student's strengths and areas for improvement in English.

- **Feedback from Primary Schools**: For incoming students, feedback from their previous schools, including the Up and Away Programme, provides valuable insights into their language proficiency. This program evaluates students' skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and any relevant information is shared with St. Brendan's College to ensure appropriate placement and support.

- **Initial Interview Assessment**: A one-on-one interview with the student, conducted by a member of the EAL team or Learning Support staff, provides a deeper understanding of the student's language abilities and personal needs. This interview helps assess both spoken and listening proficiency in an informal yet informative manner.

- **Cambridge Placement Test**: As part of the assessment process, all new EAL students will complete the Cambridge Placement Test, administered by a member of the DDLETB EAL team. This test evaluates the student's proficiency in reading comprehension, listening skills, and their ability to follow course materials such as textbooks and presentations.

- **Transfer and Visitor Students**: For students who transfer from international schools or are visiting St. Brendan's College for short-term language improvement, specific assessments are used to evaluate their current level of English. This ensures that they receive the necessary support during their stay at the school.

Supporting students who enrol mid-year:

Students who arrive at St. Brendan's College during the school year may face additional challenges as they are not only adjusting to a new environment but may also have a more developed sense of 'difference,' which can make settling into school more difficult. To support these students, we take several measures:

- **Welcome Pack**: Each new student receives a welcome pack that includes essential school information, helpful contacts, and resources for EAL students, ensuring they feel informed and supported right from the start.

- **Visual Timetables**: To help students understand the structure of their day, we provide visual timetables that highlight key school routines and subjects.

By combining these strategies, St. Brendan's College ensures that all EAL students are identified accurately and receive the appropriate support needed to thrive in their new school environment

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Role of the Language Support Teacher
Circular 0015/2009

Language Support Teachers work together with parents and regular class teachers to identify students who require extra help with learning English. They assess the students' language skills using specific assessment tools, then create and implement appropriate programs to support language development. These teachers track and document the progress of each student. Moreover, they collaborate with mainstream teachers, sharing knowledge and effective strategies to foster better English language learning across the school.

Organisation of teachers:

In Saint Brendan's College all EAL teachers, mainstream teachers and SEN teachers work together as part of a Support Team. The student remains the responsibility of the mainstream class teacher who will work closely with the Support/EAL teacher.

Role of the Support Team:

In collaboration with parents and mainstream class teachers, the Language Support Team at Saint Brendan's College, is responsible for the following:

- **Identifying students** who need additional support with language learning.

- **Assessing students' English proficiency** using tools like the Cambridge English Placement Test. This assessment helps the teacher develop a tailored language program that aims to help students reach the **B1 proficiency level**, which is required for full participation in the Irish curriculum. If a student demonstrates a low level of English proficiency, additional language support time will be allocated to ensure progress in mainstream classes.

- **Delivering an English language program** based on the Post-Primary curriculum and language proficiency benchmarks (IILT), which supports students in:

  - Engaging effectively with classroom learning.

  - Building relationships with peers.

  - Providing training opportunities for newcomer, transfer, or visiting students to prepare for Cambridge exams such as the **PET (Preliminary English Test)** and/or **FCE (First Certificate in English)**.

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- **Monitoring and supporting students' wellbeing** in partnership with the school's care team, including the implementation of social support programs when needed.

- **Tracking and recording student progress** by maintaining an EAL support file, which includes feedback from subject teachers and regular communication with parents over the course of the student's two-year eligibility period for EAL support.

- **Requesting additional resources and staff support** when necessary, in line with the school's allocation for students needing EAL support.

Collaboration Between the class teacher and language support teacher

- Working together with parents and the mainstream class teacher, the Language Support Teacher identifies students who need extra language assistance.

- The class teacher will communicate upcoming themes or units of study across various subjects where the student may require additional support.

- The class teacher will also provide feedback to the Language Support Teacher regarding the student's participation in class and their interactions with peer.

Differentiation in learning at Saint Brendan's College:

- Learning intentions will be clearly communicated at the start of each lesson/topic to help students assess their own progress.

- Both higher and lower-order questions will be used to encourage a range of thinking skills.

- A variety of teaching strategies will be employed to address different learning styles, including visual, kinaesthetic, auditory, and written approaches.

- Additional support will be provided to students who need assistance.

- The pace of lessons will be regularly reviewed and adjusted to accommodate the diverse learning needs of the students.

- Worksheets will be adapted to suit the individual learning needs of EAL students, with some worksheets being completely different when necessary.

- During group work, the teacher will ensure a mix of abilities within each group, allowing stronger students to help facilitate learning for their peers.

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- Students will be encouraged to use tools such as mind maps and graphic organisers to support their learning throughout the unit.

- This rephrasing keeps the core information intact while changing the structure to ensure it feels more original. Let me know if you need further adjustments!

Assessment in Saint Brendan's College for EAL students:

- **Homework** assigned to EAL students will be appropriate, helping to enhance their language skills and confirm their progress.

- **In-class workshops** will allow the teacher to work directly with students during lessons, providing constructive feedback.

- **Peer review, correction, and evaluation** will be integrated to encourage collaborative learning and improve student outcomes.

- **Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategies** will be actively used to monitor and support student development.

- All assessment activities will be based on typical classroom tasks, avoiding any stress-inducing, unfamiliar assessment formats.

- **In-class assessments** will be adjusted to accommodate the specific language needs of each EAL student.

- Teachers will collaborate with mainstream subject teachers to assess and evaluate the student's language development.

- **Oral assessments or presentations**, such as sharing insights about their home country, will be offered as a way to assess language skills.

- The **NCCA Assessment Toolkits**, including the Post-primary EAL Toolkit, will be used when appropriate to guide assessment and ensure best practices.

Teaching Methodologies for EAL students:

Oral

- **Pronunciation Practice**: Helping students improve their speaking through activities like role-play and discussions.

- **Collaborative Learning**: Encouraging students to work in groups to practice speaking and share ideas.

- **Task-Based Learning**: Giving students real-life speaking tasks, like presentations, to use English in context.

Reading

- **Differentiation**: Offering reading materials at different levels to match students' language skills.

- **Visual Aids and Multisensory Learning**: Using pictures and diagrams with reading texts to support understanding.

- **Explicit Vocabulary Instruction**: Teaching important words before reading so students can understand the text better.

Writing

- **Scaffolding**: Providing support like sentence starters or templates to help students write.

- **Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)**: Mixing subject content with writing practice to help students write in both English and other subjects.

- **Peer Review and Feedback**: Letting students review and give feedback on each other's writing to learn together.

English Language Proficiency Levels:

It's important to recognise that every student will have unique language proficiency needs. The table below provides a guideline for teachers to assess students at the start of the year, helping them understand each student's specific needs.

Here are the levels:

Levels used in post-primary assessment kit			
Level 0	**Level A1**	**Level A2**	**Level B1**
Absence of any English language proficiency	Can understand and use basic words and phrases in a social and school context.	Can understand, read and write simple English and can speak English sufficiently well to exchange information.	Can function well enough in English to be fully integrated into the mainstream classroom.

Previous proficiency levels		
Level 1	**Level 2**	**Level 3**
Very poor comprehension of English and very limited spoken English.	Understand some English and can speak English sufficiently well for basic communication.	Has competent communication skills in English.

Language support is delivered to students across three progressive levels, **A1, A2 and B1**. *A1 is the lowest level and is the first target for newly arrived students with little or*

no English. When students achieve B1 level across all the skills of language, they are ready for full integration into mainstream learning.

Level A1	Level A2	Level B1
Student has very basic proficiency which is limited to familiar words and phrases. Spoken interaction demands support from the other person and responses are simple, often single words or short phrases. Student can write short simple texts when provided with a model or other support.	Student has some proficiency, generally related to areas of relevance and familiarity. Can interact in simple and routine tasks on familiar topics Student can use a series of phrases or sentences to describe, explain etc. Student can write short notes and texts	Student has some proficiency, generally related to areas of relevance and familiarity. Can interact in simple and routine tasks on familiar topics Student can use a series of phrases or sentences to describe, explain etc. Student can write short notes and texts

The EAL Post-primary Assessment Kit is available at the following link: **https://www.ncca.ie/en/resources/eal-post-primary-assessment-kit**

- The assessment kit was developed by Integrate Ireland Language and Training (IILT).

- Each set in the kit starts at level A1 and continues through to level B1.

- Students should begin with A1 and continue until they find it difficult to complete a test sheet.

- Teachers should stop the test as soon as the student experiences difficulty.

- Later, the language support teacher, familiar with the student's abilities, may decide to start the assessment at a higher level.

- It is appropriate to continue testing from where the student last stopped.

- If a student's proficiency has declined (due to absence, returning home, etc.), it may be necessary to lower the starting level of the assessment.

Content Integrated Learning in the EAL Classroom:

- CLIL refers to learning a content subject (e.g., geography, history) through a foreign language, or learning a foreign language by studying a content-based subject.

- Teachers are encouraged to apply their skills and knowledge in teaching English within the EAL classroom.

Resources:

- **The Bell Foundation – EAL Teaching Resources**: Offers a comprehensive range of free classroom materials, including the EAL Assessment Framework and interactive tools to track student progress.

- **Oide – EAL Resources**: Provides professional learning materials and supports for school leaders and teachers, focusing on integrating English language support in post-primary classrooms.

- **PDST – EAL Support**: Features teaching strategies, resources, and active learning methodologies to assist EAL learners, emphasizing the importance of adapting teaching approaches to meet diverse linguistic needs.

- **JCSP Libraries – EAL Resources**: Offers practical guidance and adaptable resources for developing a whole-school framework to support EAL learners, including tools like Duolingo for language practice.

- **EAL Hub**: Created by teachers for teachers, this platform provides over 1,500 scaffolding resources designed to support EAL learners and other literacy needs in the classroom.

- **NCCA – EAL Post-Primary Assessment Kit**: Developed by Integrate Ireland Language and Training (IILT), this kit contains tests of English language proficiency to assist in assessing EAL students' language development.

- **Learning Village – Printable Resources for EAL Learners**: Provides interactive, game-based online programs and ready-made resources to engage and motivate EAL learners, suitable for group teaching and independent learning.

- **The Bell Foundation – Home Learning Resources**: Suggests various online resources, including games and activities, to support EAL learners during home learning, catering to different proficiency bands and age ranges.

- **PDST – Teaching Strategies for EAL**: Recommends strategies such as pre-teaching key vocabulary and topics to maximise the inclusion of EAL learners in the classroom, emphasizing the benefits of bilingualism.

- **Educoot-ESOL** -
https://scanner.topsec.com/?d=3514&r=show&u=https%3A%2F%2Fdrive.google.com%2Fdrive%2Ffolders%2F1RaQQGjeptYD1z3lY2VXalpVyV6DugTv6%3Fus p%3Ddrive_link&t=df8d403a2ac345bfdc040aebea4a947a9def684f

- **An intercultural Look at our Schools Toolkit** - https://ilaos.ppli.ie/

  Assistive Technology in the EAL Classroom:

- IPADS and computers available with relevant apps that were advised by Oide.