



Notice relating to the consideration of applications for an Exemption from the study of Irish under subsection 2.2a of Circular 0053/2019 on behalf of students enrolling in recognised English medium Post-primary schools for September 2020 & 2021

This Notice relates **only** to post-primary students who enrolled for the first time into 5th or 6th class in a school in Ireland during 2019/20 or into 6th class during the 2020/21 academic year and are applying for an exemption from the study of Irish under Section 2.2.a. of [Circular 0053/2019 “Exemption from the study of Irish”](#):

“students 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 the opportunity to engage in the study of Irish”

In considering an application for an exemption from the study of Irish under Section 2.2.a. of Circular 0053/2019 for any student who enrolled in a school in Ireland for the first time into 5th or 6th class during 2019/20 or into 6th class during the 2020/21 academic year, the following should be borne in mind by the post-primary principal:

Section 1.2 of Circular 0053/2019 sets out the principles underpinning the post-primary Circular. It describes the Junior Cycle programme as *“Building on students’ language learning experience as provided for in the Primary Language Curriculum, the specification for Junior Cycle Irish (L2) aims to consolidate and deepen their knowledge, understanding, values and language skills supporting their personal, cognitive and social development.”*

There is a need therefore for **the primary school principal** to consider the pupils’ educational experience and/or progress in relation to their Irish language learning in preparation for their transition to post-primary school and their engagement with the study of Junior Cycle Irish. With that in mind, the primary school should consider the available evidence of the student’s progress in learning Irish. If it is determined that the evidence indicates, as a direct result of periods of school closures due to COVID-19 during the 2019/20 and 2020/21 academic years, and notwithstanding the provision of remote teaching, the student has not made sufficient progress to prepare for engagement in the study of Irish in Junior Cycle, then the principal of the primary school should record this in the pupil’s Education Passport. Based on the evidence available on the student’s enrolment from abroad into fifth class or sixth class in 2019/2020 or into 6th class in 2020/21, the student’s engagement with and progress in learning Irish while in primary school, **the principal of the post-primary school** may consider granting an exemption on grounds that the student did not have the opportunity to engage in the study of Irish in accordance with Section 2.2.a of the Circular 0053/2019 (post-primary).



Documentary evidence supporting the post-primary principal's decision should be kept in the student's Exemption file along with the Checklist and Certificate of Exemption (available from Appendix 4 and 5 respectively of '*Exemptions from the Study of Irish: Guidelines for Post-primary Schools (English-Medium)*' published on the Department of Education website). As set out in 2.3.b) of the Circular a copy of the Certificate of Exemption must also be given to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student being exempted.

As set out in Section 3 of the Circular - Arrangements for students who are exempt from the study of Irish: "*Schools, where appropriate, should take account of the literacy learning needs of students who are exempt from the study of Irish when deploying available special education teaching resources. Students who are exempt from the study of Irish may also be allowed to substitute another subject, short course or area of learning for Irish.*" To support inclusive practices, a student who is exempt from the study of Irish should be included in a meaningful way in aspects of Irish language and cultural activities in line with his/her ability and interests.

The Department of Education website has guidelines (including checklists) and FAQs on exemptions from the study of Irish which will provide further information assistance to school management in consideration of applications for exemptions from the study of Irish. These can be accessed here: <https://www.education.ie/en/Parents/Information/Irish-Exemption/>

Enquiries on the Irish Exemption Circulars

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