

Loreto Secondary School, Wexford



Policy on Irish Exemptions

Mission Statement:

Truth, freedom, justice sincerity and joy – as relevant today in Loreto, Wexford as for Mary Ward in 1609

Rationale and Scope:

The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedures around the granting of exemptions from the study of Irish.

This policy applies to all students looking to avail of an exemption. It summarises the criteria required to grant an Irish exemption, in line with the guidelines set down by the Department of Education and Youth.

Introduction:

Irish is a core subject at both Junior and Senior Cycles in the school. Students will be encouraged to study the language and achieve a level of personal proficiency that is appropriate to their ability. All students will be provided with opportunities to engage with the subject at a level appropriate to their needs through a variety of programmes. The subject will be taught in line with the subject specifications as outlined by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). The subject will also be assessed in line with these guidelines and students will be expected to complete formal state examinations at the end of 3rd and 6th year.

Exemptions from the study of Irish:

Irish exemptions in the post-primary sector are allocated in accordance with circular 0055/2022. Further information in relation to the scheme is also available to view online using the link listed here: <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/irish-exemption/>

Incoming Students:

In relation to incoming students, the school will try to identify those who had been granted an exemption from the study of Irish by their primary school. To gather this information, the following procedures will apply:

- Parents/guardians are asked to indicate on their enrolment form if their daughter has an Irish exemption
- During our visits to the feeder primary schools, members of the Student Care Co-ordination Team will find out which students are exempt from the study of Irish.
- Primary schools will be asked to forward the relevant documentation in accordance with the Department of Education regulations on Irish exemptions.
- Only students with Irish exemptions are entitled not to participate in Irish class. No alternative supervision will be provided for students with an Irish exemption they will remain in the Irish class completing other work. Exceptions apply to those granted exemptions under article 2 (persistent literacy difficulties) who may access support at Irish times. Those who do not have exemptions must attend and participate in Irish class.

- It should be noted that a student who has been granted an exemption can choose not to use that exemption. She may study Irish up to Leaving Certificate level. However, if she has a language difficulty which may make the study of language extremely difficult, she may decide to use the exemption. Advice should be sought by the student or her parents/guardians on the implications of this in terms of entry to Third level courses.
- It is school policy that all first year students select a modern foreign language to study in 1st year.
- To support inclusive practices, a student who is exempt from the study of Irish should be included in a meaningful way in aspects of the Irish language and cultural activities in line with her abilities and interests while present in Irish classes

1.1b Criteria by which an existing student may be granted an exemption

- Regarding all other years, application for Irish Exemptions will only be made in accordance with Department of Education guidelines (Circular 0055/2022). There are three main criteria:
 - An exemption from the study of Irish may be granted to a student whose education was received outside the State (for a minimum period of three consecutive years) where he/she did not have opportunity to engage in the study of Irish**

AND either (a) or (b)

(a) who is not less than 12 years of age on the day of their enrolment or re-enrolment

OR

(b) who is enrolling following the completion of the full course of primary education recognised by another state.

- where the student scores at/or below the 10th percentile on a Word Reading, Reading Comprehension, or spelling.**

and

This student must have presented with significant learning difficulties and have had sustained access to differentiated approaches to literacy and language over time. There must be clear documentary evidence to this effect and must include Student Support plans. This evidence must also include regular reviews of learning needs, target setting and evidence-informed intervention and review.

3. **A student who experiences a high level of multiple and persistent needs that are a significant barrier to the student's participation and engagement in their learning and school life.**

An exemption from the study of Irish may be granted to a student:

(i) who experiences a high level of multiple and persistent needs that are a very significant and continuing barrier to his/her participation and engagement in his/her learning and school life

AND

(ii) whose school has substantial written evidence that these needs persist despite targeted and individualised Student Support Plans to address those needs

AND

(iii) whose school has substantial written evidence that these individualised Student Support Plans have been implemented over not less than two school years, and have been monitored and reviewed by the school in collaboration with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student

AND

(iv) who has been given every reasonable opportunity to participate in the learning of Irish in mainstream classes for as long as possible in keeping with the integrated approach to language skills development and the communicative approach underpinning the Specification for Junior Cycle Irish (L2) and the Leaving Certificate Syllabuses for Irish.

AND

(v) the principal is satisfied that the granting of an exemption is in the overall best interests of the student concerned.

1.1 (c) Procedures for granting an exemption from the study of Irish

An Irish Exemption will only be considered if every encouragement has been given to a student to engage meaningfully with the subject and there is evidence of a persistent and significant difficulty with the subject. A parent or guardian on behalf of a student or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, must make an application in writing to the school. This should be submitted to the Principal, a Deputy Principal or a member of the Additional Educational Needs Core Team.

In considering an application the school will:

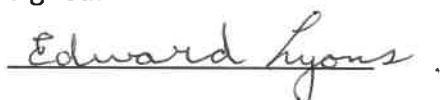
- Discuss the written application with the parents/guardian and confirm the relevant section of the circular under which the application is being made.
- Advise the parents that if the application is being made under section b(ii) that documentary evidence must be supplied by the parents to support any application.
- Advise the parents/guardians of the steps in the application process.
- Inform the parents of any implications of an exemption from the study of Irish and refer to the Guidance Department for any queries in relation to Third Level Institutions.
- Inform the parents that the application will be processed, and the outcome will be confirmed.
- Inform the parents/guardians of the appeals procedure outlined in Circular 0055/2022, if an application is refused.
- Outline to the parents/guardians the arrangements for the students learning in the case of an exemption being granted.

Irish Exemptions and Third Level College Entry

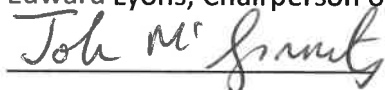
The requirements of Irish and the criteria for an Exemption for Irish for entry to any third level institution has no relevance to or impact on a student's requirement to study Irish in Loreto Secondary School, Wexford. The school is a second level school and is therefore subject to the criteria laid out in Circular 0055/22 by the Department of Education and Youth.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 25 May 2026.

Signed:



Edward Lyons, Chairperson of the Board of Management



John Mc Ginnity, Principal.