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***Irish Exemptions Policy***

**Introduction**

Irish is a core subject at both Junior and Senior Cycles in Loreto College Crumlin. The teaching of Irish comprises of five periods class contact time. In accordance with this every student must engage in class, must make every effort at homework, and must complete class and school assessments. At the end of third year all students are expected to sit Irish in the Junior Certificate Examinations and at the end of sixth year all students are expected to sit Irish in the Leaving Certificate Exams.

**Exemptions from the study of Irish**

Irish exemptions are allocated in accordance with circular 0055/2022. Students should 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 Irish at a level appropriate to their needs through a variety of programmes. However, there are exceptional circumstances where this would not be in the best interests of the student, or the effective education of students with whom they are to be educated.

Incoming Students

1. In consultation with the HSCL teacher, the SEN Dept. will contact the feeder primary schools to ascertain if incoming students:
   * Have Irish Exemptions
   * Do not attend Irish class but have no Irish Exemption. These students will be processed in accordance with section b below.

* The SEN Department will request that primary schools forward the relevant documentation in accordance with the Department of Education regulations on Irish exemptions.
* In September **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. The parents of these students are contacted, and the implications are outlined. Those who do not have exemptions must attend and participate in Irish class. They may be referred by the Irish teacher for assessment by the SEN Department to consider if they are entitled to an exemption, in accordance with paragraph b.
* 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.
* Students who avail of an Irish exemption based on a language difficulty (Section 2.2.2 Circular 0055/2022) may not study an additional modern European language, **except for those who speak that language as a first language in the home.** An exemption under these criteria is a language exemption not a specific exemption for Irish. Other students who decide to study an additional foreign language, will be aware of the ramifications of this on future entry to third level colleges by the Career Guidance Department.
* 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**

1. 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.
2. **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.

1. **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.

1. **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.

**1.1c 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 principal of the school.

In considering an application the principal will:

* Ensure the date of receipt of application is recorded.
* Acknowledge the receipt of the application in writing.
* Discuss the written application with the parents/guardian and in consultation with the SEN co-ordinator 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 Career Guidance Department for any queries in relation to Third Level Institutions.
* Inform the parents than the application will be processed, and the outcome will be confirmed in writing within 21 days of receipt of the original application.
* 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 College Crumlin. Loreto College Crumlin is a second level school and is therefore subject to the criteria laid out in Circular 0055/22 by the Department of Education and Skills.

Any entry requirements in relation to Irish for any Third Level Institution must be discussed with the Career Guidance Department.

Relevant documentation

<https://www.gov.ie/en/circular/f33d5-exemptions-from-the-study-of-irish-post-primary/>