



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE SCHOOLS DIVISION

Circular 0015/2009

To: The Managerial Authorities of Primary, Secondary, Community and Comprehensive Schools and to the Vocational Education Committees

Meeting the needs of pupils learning English as an Additional Language (EAL)

1. Introduction

Arising from the decisions made in Budget 2009 new arrangements are being put in place for the allocation of EAL support posts to schools. These new arrangements replace the current allocation arrangements that are set out in Circular 53/07 which is hereby rescinded.

The resources allocated to schools to meet the needs of pupils learning English as an Additional Language (EAL) are additional to the other supports and funding provided for schools. All pupils including migrant pupils (irrespective of their English language proficiency) are counted for the regular pupil teacher ratios in schools.

The budget measures will mean that the level of EAL support will generally be reduced to a maximum of two teachers per school, as was the case before 2007. However, there will be some alleviation for the position of those schools where there is a significant concentration of pupils learning English as an additional language as a proportion of the overall enrolment.

The new arrangements are outlined in Section 6.

2. Creating an inclusive school environment

An inclusive school environment reflects values and affirms linguistic, ethnic and cultural diversity. It is important that schools have policies and procedures in place that promote and facilitate the inclusion of all children. The school's commitment to creating an inclusive school environment

should be evident in the school plan, the promotion of parental involvement, the provision of equality of curriculum access, the facilitation of professional development opportunities and in whole-school and classroom practice. Pupils should also be encouraged and facilitated to maintain a connection with their own culture and language through curricular activities and displays.

3. The role of the EAL support teacher

EAL support teachers are appointed to assist schools in providing **additional** EAL support teaching for pupils. The EAL pupil remains the responsibility of the mainstream class teacher at primary level and the subject specialist teachers at post primary level who will work closely with the EAL support teachers. In collaboration with parents and mainstream class teachers, EAL support teachers identify pupils requiring additional language support, assess pupils' proficiency in English using the assessment materials, devise appropriate language programmes, deliver the programmes and record and monitor pupils' progress.

They share their expertise with mainstream class teachers and assist in developing and disseminating good practice to support the development of students' English language proficiency.

4. Deployment of EAL support teachers within schools

It is a matter for the school authority to deploy this teacher allocation having regard to the proficiency levels of individual pupils involved and in line with their evolving needs.

The allocation of EAL support teachers is based on allowing schools flexibility in the deployment of support. It is recommended that pupils receive additional EAL support teaching in the classroom or in timetabled EAL lessons for small groups in addition to the support they receive from the class teachers.

Clear and effective arrangements for the identification of pupils requiring support, the assessment of pupils' levels of language proficiency, programme planning, the recording and monitoring of pupils' progress and communication with parents are key features of effective EAL support provision. All of these features should be delineated in the school's policy on EAL support. While duties and responsibilities vary in every school context, it is important that the roles of all school personnel in relation to meeting the needs of pupils learning English as a second language are clearly defined and understood by all. School policy and practice should promote the sharing of expertise and good practice, and encourages communication amongst staff in order to optimise the opportunities pupils have for developing their proficiency in English.

5. Primary and Post-Primary Assessment Kit

The Primary and Post-Primary Assessment Kits are a useful tool for schools to determine the initial language proficiency of each pupil and to evaluate how well pupils are progressing with their language skills in English. The tests will help to establish a pupil's level of English on arrival in school, monitor progress over time in language support and identify the point at which a pupil no longer requires additional language support. Primary and Post- Primary EAL teachers are receiving training in the use of these kits during the current academic year, 08/09.

At this stage, it is not proposed to oblige schools to base all their applications for EAL support on the assessments carried out using the language assessment kit. However, schools will be asked to use the assessment kit if they are seeking EAL support for pupils for an additional year beyond the 2 year period.

The table below outlines the levels of proficiency that were used when assessing pupils' language ability prior to the publication of the Primary/Post-Primary Assessment kits. The table also includes the nearest equivalent levels for those schools using the Primary/Post-Primary Assessment Kits.

N.B. Pupils with very little English may be initially assessed as at Level 0 (see Primary Assessment Kit, p.16 and Post-Primary Assessment Kit, p.12). Level A1 in the Assessment Kit should be their first learning target.

Proficiency levels used prior to publication of Primary and Post-Primary Assessment Kits			
Level 1		Level 2	
Very poor comprehension of English and very limited spoken English		Understands some English and can speak English sufficiently well for basic communication	
		Level 3	
		Has competent communication skills in English	
Nearest equivalent levels using Primary and Post-Primary Assessment Kits			
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

The English Language Proficiency Levels specify what pupils should be able to achieve in English at each level and thus reflect the task-based approach to teaching and learning. Tasks have been selected to reflect what pupils encounter daily in the classroom. Scoring procedures have been designed to achieve accurate results, provided the tests are administered strictly according to the instructions provided.

EAL support resources are made available for schools catering for pupils with significant English language deficits assessed as having a language proficiency of either Level 1(0 or A1) or Level 2 (A2) based on the allocation thresholds outlined below.

All documentation in relation to the administration of tests must be retained by the school for audit/inspection purposes.

6. Allocation of resources for EAL support:

6.1. Schools with fewer than 14 pupils requiring EAL support

Grant aid is allocated at primary level to facilitate the Board of Management in funding the provision of part-time EAL support whilst at post primary level EAL support is allocated on the basis of part-time teaching hours.

6.2. New arrangements for allocation of full-time EAL support posts (See Appendix for outline of examples of support)

The table below sets out the full-time resources that can be accessed to provide EAL support for pupils in the first two years:

No. of posts	No. of pupils that require EAL support
1 post	14 to 30 pupils
2 posts	31 to 90 pupils

6.3. Alleviation measures for schools with substantial number of pupils requiring EAL support

This will involve up to 2 additional EAL support posts being allocated on the following basis:

No. of posts	No. of pupils that require EAL support
3 posts	91 to 120 pupils
4 posts	121 and over

Pupils for the 3rd and subsequent EAL support posts to be counted on the following basis:

- one for one basis where pupil has less than 1 year of EAL support
- two for one basis if a pupil has between 1 and 2 years EAL support (i.e., a weighting system will be applied so that every 2 of these pupils that have already had EAL support for between 1 and 2 years will be counted as 1 pupil for the purposes of meeting the allocation thresholds for EAL support posts).

Potential additional posts by appeal

- Primary schools where at least 25% of their total enrolment is made up of pupils that require EAL support (pupils with less than B1 (Level 3) proficiency) can lodge an appeal to the Primary Staffing Appeals Board for a review of their proposed allocation for 2009/10 under the above rules. The following amendment will be made to the existing criteria for making appeals to the Staffing Appeals Board –
 - Where the Appeal Board is satisfied that having considered the circumstances outlined by the school and having regard to the high number of pupils requiring EAL support additional post(s) may be approved to support the educational needs of such pupils
- Post-Primary or VEC schools where a significant number of the total enrolment is made up of EAL pupils with less than B1 (Level 3) proficiency can lodge an appeal for a review of their proposed allocation.
- Post-Primary or VEC schools where a significant number of EAL pupils with less than B1 (Level 3) proficiency are in third year or in the senior cycle can lodge an appeal for a review of their proposed allocation.

Post-Primary and VEC schools can lodge an appeal to the Independent Appeals Board at Post-Primary level.

7. Important points to note when counting pupil numbers

- In determining all allocations for EAL support those pupils that have had the least amount of EAL support must be counted first.
- Schools must use 1 September 2009 as the reference date for determining how many years EAL support has already been given to pupils.
- Schools must take into account any EAL support provided to pupils in previous school(s) attended
- Pupils for 3rd and subsequent EAL support posts are counted on a one for one basis if they have had less than 1 year of EAL support and a two for one basis if they have between 1 and 2 years EAL support.
- If the Department is satisfied that EAL support is required for an additional year beyond the 2 year period (see 8 below) then such pupils will be counted on a three for one basis for the purposes of meeting the allocation thresholds for all part-time and full-time EAL support posts.
- Allocations of EAL support posts will be given on a provisional basis pending confirmation of actual enrolment on 30 September. In exceptional circumstances, if a significant number of students requiring EAL support are enrolled after 30 September, then the school may apply for additional resources.

8. Applications for EAL support for pupils beyond the 2 year period

All applications for EAL support for pupils for an additional year beyond the 2 year period will be dealt with on the following basis:

- The application in respect of such pupils must include details of how the school has addressed the language needs of these pupils in the previous 2 years.
- The application in respect of such pupils must outline how it is proposed to optimise the opportunities of the pupils for whom an additional year is being sought.
- Each pupil for whom EAL support is sought beyond the 2 year period must have an assessment carried out using the Primary or Post Primary Assessment Kit. The assessment must have been carried out within 3 months of the date of submission of the application for EAL support to the Department and must show that the pupil has not attained Level B1 proficiency. The actual assessments do not need to be submitted to the Department but retained in the school and kept available for inspection.
- If the Department is satisfied that EAL support is required for an additional year beyond the 2 year period then such pupils will be counted on a **3 for 1** basis for the purposes of meeting allocation thresholds for all part-time and full-time EAL support posts (i.e., a weighting system will be applied

so that every 3 of these pupils that have already had EAL support for 2 years or more will only count as 1 pupil for the purposes of meeting the allocation thresholds for all part-time and full-time EAL support posts).

9. General

There is an option of additional language support through Irish for pupils in schools that provide instruction through the medium of Irish provided those pupils first language is neither English nor Irish. This option is only available for pupils who otherwise qualify under the terms of this circular and will not be provided for pupils whose first language is English.

10. Application forms

The same form should be used at primary level to apply for grant aid and for EAL support posts.

Please click here [EALP1.doc](#) to download Primary Application Form EAL/P1 and here [Form NN09.10.doc](#) for Post Primary Application form NN 09/10.

Please note that queries regarding the Circular may be E-Mailed to

Primary Schools - <mailto:PrimaryAllocations@education.gov.ie> and

Post-primary Schools – <mailto:Allocations@education.gov.ie>

Hubert Loftus
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Primary Teacher Allocations

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March, 2009

Appendix

The following sample cases help illustrate the new allocation arrangements for fulltime posts:

Sample cases	Current position	Position for 2009/10 using above allocation method set out in this circular and below
School with 121 pupils that have had less than 1 year of language support	6 posts	Total 4 posts* calculated as follows 2 posts automatically for first 90 pupils 3 rd post for next 30 pupils (91-120 counted 1 for 1) 4 th post – 121 pupils
School with 121 pupils that have had between 1 and 2 years language support	6 posts	Total 3 posts* calculated as follows 2 posts automatically for first 90 pupils 3 rd post for remaining 31 pupils counted as 15.5 on 2 for 1 basis
School with between 14 to 30 pupils that have had less than 2 years of language support	1 or 2 posts	1 post*
School with between 31 to 90 pupils that have had less than 2 years of language support	2 to 4 posts	2 posts*
School with 120 pupils (40 of whom have had less than 1 year of language support and the other 80 pupils have had language support for between 1 & 2 years	5 posts	3 posts* calculated as follows: 2 posts automatically for first 90 pupils (the 40 pupils that have had less than 1 year EAL support must be counted first) 3 rd post for remaining 30 pupils counted as 15 pupils on 2 for 1 basis

*** Potential additional posts by appeal set out in Section 6.3 of Circular and below.**

Primary schools where at least 25% of their total enrolment is made up of pupils that require EAL support (pupils with less than B1 (Level 3) proficiency) can lodge an appeal to the Primary Staffing Appeals Board for a review of their proposed allocation for 2009/10 under the above rules. The following amendment will be made to the existing criteria for making appeals to the Staffing Appeals Board –

- *Where the Appeal Board is satisfied that having considered the circumstances outlined by the school and having regard to the high number of pupils requiring EAL support additional post(s) may be approved to support the educational needs of such pupils*

Post-primary or VEC schools, where a significant number of their total enrolment is made up of EAL pupils with less than B1 (Level 3) proficiency can lodge an appeal for a review of their proposed allocation.

Post-primary or VEC schools where a significant number of EAL pupils with less than B1 (Level 3) proficiency are in third year or in the senior cycle can lodge an appeal for a review of their proposed allocation.

Post-Primary and VEC schools can lodge an appeal to the Independent Appeals Board at Post-Primary level.