

Irish Exemption Details

Background

The Department of Education and Skills allows students to apply to be excused from studying Irish in primary and post-primary school.

The circumstances in which a student will be given this exemption are very limited and only affect a small percentage of our School student population. Where a student has lived abroad or does not speak English, they may be exempted. Students with certain disabilities may also be exempted. Information about post-primary school exemption can be found in Circular M10/94 on the DES website at www.education.ie.

Where entry to a third-level course requires a student to have a certain mark in Irish at the Leaving Certificate examination, students who have been exempted from the study of Irish may also be exempted from this requirement. This is a matter for each individual college. The student applying for a third-level course through the Central Applications Office (CAO) should send a copy of the exemption certificate with his/her CAO application form.

Rules

These are the categories of student who may apply to be exempted from the study of Irish include:

- Students whose primary education up to 11 years of age was received in Northern Ireland or outside Ireland
- Students who were enrolled in a primary or post-primary school and who are now enrolling again after having been abroad. The student must have been abroad for at least three years. The student must be at least 11 years of age when re-enrolling.
- Students who function at an average or above-average level of ability, but who have a specific learning difficulty that is so severe that they cannot reach expected levels of attainment in their mother tongue.
- Students who have a general learning disability due to a serious intellectual impairment and who are not acquiring basic language skills in their mother tongue.
- Students who have a general learning disability on account of a serious sensory impairment, and who are not learning basic language skills in their mother tongue

Students from abroad, who have no understanding of English, when enrolled, would only be required to study one language, either English or Irish.

How to apply

The application for exemption is made by the parent or guardian to the Principal. The application should state the reasons and grounds why the exemption is being sought.

The parent or guardian must attach documentary evidence of the student's age, and previous schooling if it is relevant to the reason for the exemption being sought.

If the exemption is sought on the grounds of a disability, the parent or guardian must supply evidence of the disability from a qualified psychologist and may also require a report from an appropriate medical specialist. The school authorities then prepare a full report on the student.

Where an exemption is granted, a certificate of exemption is sent to the school. This is signed by the Principal. It is the responsibility of the Principal/Deputy/SEN Department to tell the parent/student about the result of the application.

Further enquiries

Further details on exemptions from Irish can be gained by contacting the Principal and/or Deputy Principal. The Special Needs Department can also be contacted in relation to same.