



Language Policy

Introduction

Wicklow Educate Together National School Language policy will inform the entire school community of the schools' commitment to language development. For EAL pupils this involves both English (L2) and their native tongue (L1) development.

Rationale

Language teaching and learning in primary education strives to empower all pupils to reach their full potential as individuals and to become fully integrated members of the community of the school and the wider social community, while respecting and valuing the richness of cultures and linguistic diversity.

Aim

The aims of this language policy is the promotion and achievement of:

- Excellent English and Gaeilge language skills in all areas (oral language, reading, writing) for all pupils, those who are native speakers and pupils with English as an Addition Language (EAL).
- A positive attitude towards all languages which our children speak.
- A positive attitude to Irish culture and the cultures of all pupils by validating every child's identity through the language learning experience.
- A validation of each pupil's unique cultural and linguistic identity
- An appreciation of the linguistic skills of EAL learners

Compliance with school ethos

- WETNS strives to provide an environment where each individual child reach its full academic and social potential.
- This policy is formulated with the 4 core principles in mind

Guidelines

Staff Roles

All school staff, including teachers, SNAs and ancillary staff are made aware of the importance of mother tongue (home language, L1) in the child's development. Parents are

also actively encouraged to enhance their child's language learning through maintenance and development of their child's mother tongue.

Class Teacher

The role and responsibility of the class teacher is to teach the curriculum to all the pupils (native speakers of English, EAL, Special Needs pupils) in the class, being mindful of the strengths and weaknesses brought by children to the task of learning.

Language Support Teacher

The primary responsibility of the language support teacher is to promote the pupil's development of English language proficiency so that she can gradually gain access to the curriculum, ultimately achieving the same educational opportunities as English-speaking peers so that she can reach her potential as a fully participative learner within the school. The language support teacher delivers a programme of English language tuition which is based on the requirements of the primary curriculum and which prepares and supports the child in:

- Accessing classroom learning
- Socialising with peers

On-going liaison between the language support teacher and the mainstream teacher is crucial to EAL learner success which is achieved by:

- Working in collaboration with the mainstream class teacher to set relevant and achievable learning targets for each pupil.
- Preparing the pupil, on an on-going basis, to access mainstream learning, initially in part and later more fully.
- Helping the pupil to develop appropriate strategies and skills to support future formal education in general.
(Up and Away, 2006: pp. 4-7; 41-54)

The joint objective of both class and language support teachers is to:

- Ensure that the newly arrived pupil can understand and use the basic language of the classroom (e.g. toilet, copy from board, etc.)
- Equip the pupil with knowledge of the rules and procedures of the school so that he or she does not unwittingly infringe them.
- Help the pupil to understand different norms of behaviour that may exist in the new culture/society (in classroom, school, playground, etc).
- Help to build the confidence and self-esteem of the pupil who may feel different, excluded and less able than those around him or her. Valuing the home language of the pupil is a crucial step in this process.

Practical implementation of language policy

Developing the stated aim of the Language policy will be addressed in such a way as to ensure that the atmosphere and environment of the school encourages affirmation, respect and inclusiveness of all. Specifically, this can be accomplished through:

- The formal curriculum
- Wall displays
- Nurturing a culture of language awareness for all pupils in Wicklow Educate Together National School
- Participating in activities such as Léargas programmes, Blue flag and other activities that promote appreciation and understanding of each other's cultures and identities
- Highlighting different languages in annual events such as Christmas concerts,
- Actively encouraging parents to maintain and develop their children's L1 spoken and literacy skills
- Encouraging parents to take an active part in educational initiatives in the school where their language skills can be highlighted and utilised
- Using language skills of various staff members to support language awareness
- Demonstrating respect and valuing everyone

Success criteria

- All pupils reach their full potential in accordance with their abilities.
- All language and cultures are valued and celebrated in the school
- Children develop lifelong learning
- We strive to provide our pupils with a wholesome education that values diversity and celebrates achievement. A whole school approach towards teaching and learning is adopted to ensure successful inclusion for all. Each child is valued as an individual with their own set of abilities, goals, motivations and attitudes. We aim to develop these abilities while also providing pupils with the skills they require to become lifelong learners.

Timeframe for Implementation

- The policy will be implemented from February 2016 after consultation with the school community and will be reviewed as necessary but no later than the school year 2017/2018

Responsibility for Review

- The Language Policy will be reviewed by the partners in education in the light of changing needs. This policy will be reviewed during the school year 2017/2018 by staff members and parents. Any changes made will then be ratified by the Board of Management

Ratification and Communication

- The policy has been in operation in the school since April 2016 having been communicated by the BOM by means of circular following ratification at school BOM meeting of 12th April 2016