



**St. Francis' College**  
**English as an Additional Language (EAL) Policy**

**Introduction**

The 'College' refers to all the staff and pupils of the Prep Department and Senior School which includes Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), Pre-prep (Key Stage 1), Prep (Key Stage 2), and Senior School (Key Stages 3-5).

St. Francis' College is an independent selective, day and boarding school with pupils between the ages of 3 and 18 years.

**The Aims of the EAL (English as an Additional Language) Department**

The EAL department aims to:

- a) prepare students for external EAL examinations (International English Language Testing System - IELTS) required for entry to universities in the U.K. and overseas;
- b) prepare students in Years 10 and 11 for the IGCSE in English as a Second Language;
- c) help students gain the best grades possible at GCSE and A Level;
- d) help students to operate successfully in their chosen subjects, offering in-class and/or out-of-class support where necessary;
- e) teach students to become as proficient as possible in understanding and using the English language in all its forms;
- f) introduce students to some cultural aspects of the U.K.;
- g) help students to integrate into English life and develop their social skills; and
- h) be a point of contact for subject staff when students experience difficulties.

**New pupils and the initial assessment of language ability**

All new pupils from overseas are assessed by a member of the EAL Department on a one-to-one basis as soon as possible after arrival. The assessment is done orally so that the assessor can quickly build up a picture of the student's personal and educational background and determine the ease with which she will be able to cope with basic oral instructions in

functional language. Relevant information is recorded on an EAL student profile form which also acts as the basis for questions the interviewer may wish to ask. EAL students entering the College sit EAL and Maths entrance examinations. Once a new EAL pupil arrives further testing may be carried out, such as the ARELS test or online placement tests. All assessments are then used to form the basis of schemes of work. Courses are tailored to suit our students' very specific individual or small group requirements.

At the beginning of the academic year all students within the Senior School take the InCAS, MIDYIS, YELLIS and ALIS tests. Durham University has noted that results of the non-verbal and Maths papers are the most reliable in terms of assessing an overseas pupil. However, this baseline data is only one of many assessment methods used to monitor a student's progress. The EAL Department constantly reviews each pupil's work and adapts the lesson content accordingly.

### **Placement of pupils in forms**

Heads of Year are responsible for placing overseas students in forms and it is recommended that they consult with the Head of EAL and the Head of Admissions so that, where possible, EAL pupils with similar interests and abilities are put in the same form.

### **Background to EAL lessons**

The EAL Department aims to be as flexible as possible so that the needs of individual students are met. This is particularly true of pupils in the upper part of the school when they approach their public examinations. At such times, careful discussion takes place with students over the best use of their EAL provision. Students may, for example, ask to have individual lessons which will help them with the language of a specific subject. For example, students may request guidance with Economics, Business Studies or Art, while others have requested lessons in writing skills and literature. In EAL lessons, particularly in the lower school, some students may be given a selection of course books from which to choose under guidance of the teacher. At all times the aim is to involve students in taking responsibility for their own learning.

The number of lessons pupils receive very much depends on their level, timetabling constraints and, very occasionally, parental requests. As a general guide, Sixth Formers receive two double lessons per week (ie up to 2 hours 20 minutes) for IELTS/EAL/subject specific English/help with UCAS. Pupils in other forms have a minimum of three single lessons per week. If a pupil's English is weak, approximately six to eight lessons would be recommended. (A single lesson is 35 minutes long). Pupils are taught either individually, in a small group (2-5) or a large group (6+) but the group size is dependent on the timetable and subject choices. In order to receive their EAL tuition, pupils are withdrawn from one or more of: RS, French, German, and, occasionally, from mainstream English. However, it must be stressed that, as a timetable is drawn up to suit an individual's requirements, there are exceptions to this. Some students are keen, for example, to attend French and German, and this is something the EAL Department encourages.

## **EAL & More Able Students**

Overseas students may well show themselves to be particularly talented in a subject or field, and may be identified by the College as More Able. The EAL Department supports all students in their attempts to stretch and challenge themselves so that their understanding of English is not a barrier to learning.

## **EAL & Individual Needs**

Occasionally students are identified who have both EAL and specific learning difficulties. It can be hard to detect such difficulties in students whose first language is not English. Indeed, it is common for slow progress to be attributed to a lack of English. Although baseline testing can be a reasonable indicator of difficulties ahead, there are other signs to watch out for. Consistently slow reading speeds, a poor level of cohesion in written work, together with muddled word order as well as muddled letter order in individual words may well be indicators of underlying difficulties. If the EAL Department suspects that a student is struggling, close liaison with the Individual Needs Department, the Deputy Head Academic and the Head of Prep are needed to identify the best course of action.

## **Spiritual, Ethical and Moral Themes**

The EAL lessons that pupils receive are based on a variety of themes and topics. If an issue is raised during a lesson, it is more likely to be of a moral/ethical nature and therefore does not pertain to Christianity alone. Since most pupils opting to take EAL sessions are non-Christian, a set of values is discussed and promoted when an issue arises, in line with Fundamental British Values. As EAL classes are small (1-10), we are able to give our pupils individual care and attention. Some are natural language learners, while others struggle. Individual pupils are encouraged to use their strengths to boost confidence and to work on their weaknesses. All pupils are from overseas with different backgrounds, cultures, religions and traditions. It is very important for us to respect those differences and to have an understanding of them. In addition, mutual understanding and respect should be encouraged in each pupil.

## **Related Policies**

Curriculum Policy  
Individual Needs Policy  
More Able Policy

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