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Kilbrittain N.S.

Kilbrittain

Co. Cork.

March 2023

Irish Exemption Policy

Introduction

This policy was formulated in Kilbrittain National School in March 2023 in conjunction with the school staff, parents and Board of Management. This policy will replace the current policy on the Exemption of Irish in our school.

Rationale

This policy was drafted following the introduction of new guidelines issued by the Department of Education in September 2019. Circular 52/2019 is a revision of Circular 12/1996 and forms the basis for this revised school policy. These guidelines have been developed in response to the extensive feedback received in response to the publication of draft circulars in relation to exemptions from Irish. The guidelines are also informed by the principles of the Primary Language Curriculum and follow the needs based model as set out in the Continuum of Support for students with Special Educational Needs.

It is acknowledged that despite the flexibility of the Primary Language Curriculum and the steps taken and support put in place within the Continuum of Support in our school that some children may continue to struggle to make adequate progress in acquiring the language of instruction in our school, namely English. In such circumstances and following the guidelines set out in Circular 52/2019 and the procedure and process set out below in this policy, an exemption from the study of Irish may be granted.

Relationship to School Ethos.

This policy is in keeping with the mission statement and vision of our school, which strives to enhance the self-esteem of all our students through providing for the intellectual, physical, moral and cultural needs of all, ensuring that every child is provided with every opportunity to reach their potential.

Aims and Objectives

The purpose of this policy is to provide clarity surrounding the application, process and procedures which

are to be adhered to should a child be granted or considered for an exemption from the study of Irish in our school.

At all times this policy aims to allow for pupils of differing abilities, interests and circumstances, enhances inclusivity within our school and strives to enable all children of all abilities to access the curriculum in our school.

Criteria for Exemption from the Study of Irish

The following criteria for granting an Irish exemption are set out in Circular 52/2019 and are quoted below. In granting an exemption from Irish in our school, the school authorities, in consultation with parents, must be satisfied that the criteria are met and the process has been followed correctly.

Granting an exemption from the study of Irish

2.1 An exemption should be granted only in exceptional circumstances

Exempting a pupil from the study of Irish will be considered only in those exceptional circumstances set out in section 2.2 of this Circular. The decision to exempt a pupil from the study of Irish is an important decision that has implications for his/her future learning. The decision to grant an exemption from the study of Irish is made by the principal, but it must be made following detailed discussion with the pupil's parent(s)/guardian(s), the class teacher, special education teachers¹ and the pupil. A decision to grant an exemption should only be considered in the circumstances set out in section 2.2 below.

2.2 The circumstances in which a pupil may be granted an exemption from the study of Irish

An exemption from the study of Irish may be allowed in the following circumstances, 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3, 2.2.4 or 2.2.5 only:

2.2.1 A pupil moving from a different country without previous experience of learning the Irish language

An exemption from the study of Irish may be granted to a pupil 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 enrolment² or re-enrolment

OR

(b) who is enrolling following the completion of the full course of primary education recognised by another state.

2.2.2 A pupil who experiences significant literacy difficulties which are an obstacle to their learning across the curriculum

An exemption from the study of Irish may be granted to a pupil:

(i) who has reached at least second class

AND

(ii) who presents with significant literacy difficulties that are persistent despite having had access to a differentiated approach to language and literacy learning in all subjects/across the curriculum and over time.

Documentary evidence to this effect, held by the school, should include Student Support Plans detailing:

- regular reviews of learning needs as part of an ongoing cycle of assessment
- target-setting
- evidence-informed intervention and review, including test scores (Word Reading, Reading Comprehension, Spelling, other scores of language/literacy) at key points of review

AND

(iii) who, at the time of the application for exemption presents with a standardised score on a discrete test in either Word Reading, Reading Comprehension or Spelling at/below the 10th percentile.

Normally, pupils availing of an exemption under this category should be encouraged to engage with the study of oral Irish language for as long as possible in keeping with the integrated approach in the *Primary Language Curriculum* and acknowledging that pupils at a young age adapt and improve over time.

2.2.3 A pupil who experiences a high level of multiple and persistent needs that are a significant barrier to the pupil's participation and engagement in their learning and school life

It is recognised that there is a small cohort of pupils who have a high level of multiple and persistent needs that are a significant barrier to their participation and engagement in their learning and school life. In the case of these pupils, consideration may need to be given to adjusting the range of learning experiences to ensure that their needs are met and that they may engage purposefully in their learning in school. In very exceptional circumstances, this means that consideration may need to be given to exempting them from the study of Irish.

An exemption from the study of Irish may be granted to a pupil:

(i) who has at least reached second class

AND

(ii) 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

(iii) whose school has substantial written evidence that these needs persist despite targeted and individualised Student Support Plans to address those needs

AND

(iv) 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 pupil

AND

(v) 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 in the *Primary Language Curriculum* and acknowledging that pupils at a young age adapt and improve over time

AND

(vi) the principal is satisfied that the granting of an exemption is in the overall best interests of the pupil concerned.

Normally, this will mean that the pupil will be expected to engage with the study of Irish at least to the end of fifth class. However, in very exceptional circumstances, where the principal is satisfied that an exemption is warranted to address the high level of multiple and persistent needs of the pupil, and certifies that all of the conditions in **(i)** to **(vi)** above have been met, it may be granted at an earlier stage, but in no case may this be earlier than second class.

2.2.4A pupil in a recognised³ special school or class or who was previously enrolled in a recognised special school or class or whom has a recommendation⁴ and has been deemed eligible⁵ for a place in a recognised special school and/or in a special class in a mainstream school

(i) Where a pupil is currently enrolled in a recognised special school or special class in a mainstream school or who has previously been enrolled in a recognised special school or special class in a mainstream school and who is transitioning to mainstream provision, that pupil is automatically entitled to an exemption from the study of Irish without an application.

OR

(ii) Where a pupil has a recommendation and has been deemed eligible for a place in a recognised special school and/or in a special class in a mainstream school an application for an exemption from the study of Irish will be required.

Normally, pupils availing of an exemption under **(i)OR(ii)** of this category should be encouraged to engage with the study of oral Irish language for as long as possible in keeping with the integrated approach in the *Primary Language Curriculum* and acknowledging that pupils at a young age adapt and improve over time.

2.2.5 A pupil whose parent(s)/guardian(s) is a/are diplomatic or consular representative(s) of another country to Ireland irrespective of age or educational history

An exemption from the study of Irish may be granted to a pupil whose parent(s)/guardian(s) is a/are diplomatic or consular representative(s) of another country to Ireland irrespective of age or educational history.

2.3 Procedures for granting an exemption from the study of Irish

(a) Steps required for a valid application for an exemption from the study of Irish

1. A parent/guardian must make an application in writing to the principal of the school for a Certificate of Exemption from the study of Irish on behalf of a pupil.
2. The school staff shall mark the date of receipt of the application on the application form and issue an acknowledgement to the parent(s)/guardian(s) upon receipt of the application.
3. At the earliest opportunity a school official should contact the applicant(s) and:

- discuss the written application with the applicant(s) and confirm the sub-paragraph on which the application is based (as outlined in section 2.2 above) N.B. If a parent/guardian does not confirm the sub-paragraph under which the application is based then the application is null and void and no further processing of the application will take place. Only criteria contained in this Circular can be considered as grounds for an exemption from the study of Irish and no other exceptional circumstances can be considered.

- advise the applicant(s) of the steps involved in processing the application.

- inform the parent(s)/guardian(s)/pupil of the implications of an exemption from the study of Irish for the pupil while in primary education and into the future.

4. The application should be fully processed and the outcome confirmed in writing within 21 school days of receipt of the application.

5. When a decision is reached that an exemption from the study of Irish may be granted a signed Certificate of Exemption will be issued to the parent(s)/guardian(s) and a copy will be held by the school in the pupil's file. The record keeping requirements are outlined further at 2.3(c) below.

6. Where an application is refused, the principal must inform the applicant(s) in writing outlining the reasons for refusal and notifying the applicant(s) that the school's decision may be appealed to the Irish Exemptions Appeal Committee within 30 calendar days of the date of the written decision.

(b) Considering an application for exemption

In considering an application for exemption from the study of Irish the principal will:

1. Review the application and any documentation provided by the applicant(s);
2. Consult with the pupil's class teacher;
3. Consult with the special education teacher and the assigned teacher from the Visiting Teacher Service where relevant;
4. Review school documentation for the evidence outlined in subsection 2.2;
5. Consult the following as appropriate;

- *Exemptions from the Study of Irish: Guidelines for Primary Schools* and the supporting documents maintained by the Department on the Government webpage on exemptions from the study of Irish: www.gov.ie/en/service/irish-exemption/
- *Guidelines for Primary Schools: Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools* developed by the National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS), the Inspectorate and Special Education Section, DES (2017): <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/edf64-guidelines-for-primary-schools-supporting-pupils-with-special-educational-needs-in-mainstream-schools/>
- *Special Educational Needs: A Continuum of Support*, NEPS (2007): <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/dca316-special-education-needs-a-continuum-of-support/>
- Catalogue of Wellbeing Resources for Schools: www.gov.ie - [Catalogue of Wellbeing Resources for Schools](#) (www.gov.ie)
- *Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties: A Continuum of Support: Guidelines for Teachers*, NEPS (2010): <https://assets.gov.ie/40684/97bbea80d96b4057bf3f1f01107c7db4.pdf>
- *Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum: Guidelines for Schools*, NCCA (2007): <https://curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/2b3eaa53-cb4b-4053-9d71-2d28d9d6c734/Assessment-Guidelines.pdf>

(c) Recording the decision

The outcome of the application process will be conveyed by the school in writing to the applicant.

Where an exemption is granted, a Certificate of Exemption, signed and dated by the school principal will be issued.

- i. The Certificate of Exemption will state the name and address of the school, the school roll number, the pupil's name, date of birth and the sub-paragraph under which the exemption is being granted. A Certificate of Exemption Is hyperlinked in the checklists within the Guidelines accompanying this Circular, published by the Department on the government website.
- ii. The arrangements for the pupil's learning will be explained to the parent(s)/guardian(s)/pupil.

iii. It will be explained to the parent(s)/guardian(s) that incidental learning of Irish language may occur through engagement with greetings, phrases, festivals and that a positive attitude to Irish should be fostered by the parent(s)/guardian(s).

iv. Parent(s)/guardian(s) and the pupil should be informed of the option not to exercise the exemption granted, without any loss of the right to exercise it at a future time.

v. The application form, all supporting documentation, and a copy of the Certificate of Exemption will be retained by the school in accordance with data protection legislation and will be made available for inspection by authorised officers of the Department. In maintaining such documentation, schools should ensure that they have obtained appropriate parental/guardian consent for the retention and use of such records.

vi. In addition, where an exemption from the study of Irish is granted, the school should update the pupil's record on the Primary Online Database (POD) as soon as possible to include the reason for that exemption.

Where an application is refused, a copy of the application form, together with the letter of refusal and all supporting documentation, will be retained by the school in accordance with data protection legislation. The school should maintain the records for at least the duration of the pupil's enrolment in the school. In maintaining such documentation, schools should ensure that they have obtained appropriate parental/guardian consent for the retention and use of such records.

2.4 Appeal

Where the application for exemption from the study of Irish is refused, an applicant can appeal the school's decision to the Irish Exemptions Appeals Committee (IEAC). The IEAC will comprise three persons who shall be selected from a panel of persons established and maintained by the Minister, having regard to the need for each IEAC to have available to it:

- Experience and skills in the provision of or inspection of special education in schools
- Experience and skills in the area of educational psychology and/or child and adolescent wellbeing and mental health
- Experience and skills in the leadership and administration of schools
- Experience and skills in the initial or continuing education of teachers of pupils with special educational needs.

The IEAC will make a decision on whether the exemption should be granted or not, inform the school of the decision and require the school to give effect to their decision. In making a decision the IEAC will consider the decision of the school and the grounds given for refusing the application, the criteria set out in this Circular and any supporting documentation that was available to the school, contained in the Student Support Plan(s) and any supplementary information provided to the school by the applicant. The appeal should be made on the appropriate form published on the Department's website.

The appeal must be lodged within 30 calendar days from the date of the written decision of the school not to grant an exemption was notified in writing to the applicant. Irish Exemption Appeal Form and Guidelines for Primary Schools can be accessed at www.gov.ie/en/service/irish-exemption/

3. Arrangements for pupils who are exempt from the study of Irish

Schools, where appropriate, should take account of the literacy learning needs of pupils who are exempt from the study of Irish when deploying available special education teaching resources.

To support inclusive practices, a pupil who is exempt from the study of Irish should be included in a meaningful way in aspects of Irish language and cultural activities in line with his/her ability and interests. It should be noted that pupils have the option not to exercise the exemption granted, without any loss of the right to exercise it at a future time.

For Consideration.

Parents are to be informed by the principal or class teacher of the implications if any exemption for Irish will have on the child's education now and into the future.

An exemption from Irish excludes a child from written Irish and from reading Irish. Every effort will be made and should be made to include every pupil in some aspects of oral work and to include the pupil in Irish culture and history of the language.

Appeals Procedure.

Parents will be informed that should an application be refused that they may apply to the Irish Exemptions Appeals Committee. Parents must fill in the relevant form and send it to the committee through the Department of Education.

Ratification.

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management of Kilbrittain National School.

Signed: _____

Karen O'Donovan (Principal)

Date: _____

Signed: _____

Imelda Hurley (Chairperson, BoM)

Date: _____

**Application for Exemption from the study of Irish
Kilbrittain National School, Co. Cork**

For Completion by Parent(s) / Guardian(s)

I / We wish to apply to Kilbrittain National School for an exemption from the study of Irish on behalf of our son / daughter.

Name of Pupil

Date of Birth

Class

Please indicate below the ground for applying for an exemption from the study of Irish in accordance with Circular 0052/2019.

2.2a: pupils whose education up to 12 years of age (or up to and including the final year of primary education) was received outside the state and where they did not have opportunity to engage in the study of Irish.

2.2b: pupils who were previously enrolled as a recognised pupils in primary schools who are being re-enrolled after a period spent abroad, provided that at least three consecutive years have elapsed since the previous enrolment in the state and are at least 12 years of age on re-enrolment.

2.2c: pupils who have at least reached second class and present with significant and persistent learning difficulties and present with a Standardised Score in a discrete test at/below the 10th percentile in either Word Reading, Reading Comprehension or Spelling.

2.2d: children of Foreign Nationals who are diplomatic or consular representatives in Ireland.

Please provide details of any supporting documentation being submitted to the school.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

I / We the undersigned understand that documentation provided may be reviewed for the purposes of processing this application by relevant school personnel and other professionals if necessary.

Signed: _____ **Signed:** _____

Date: _____ **Date:** _____

Received by the School.

Principal _____ **Date:** _____

Roll Number

**Application for Exemption from the study of
Irish Kilbrittain National School, Co. Cork**

Targeted Approach

Name of Pupil		
Class		
Teacher	Support Teacher	
Standardised Test	Percentile Results	
Word Reading Reading Comprehension Spelling		
Outline of Concerns		
Details of existing differentiated approach in English		
Details of targeted approach in Irish		
Parents' Signatures _____		
Teachers' Signatures _____		
Date: _____		
Date of Next Meeting		

**Application for Exemption from the study of
Irish Kilbrittain National School, Kilbrittain, Co.
Cork**

Targeted Approach

Name of Pupil

Class

Teacher

Support Teacher

Standardised Test

Percentile Results

**Word Reading
Reading Comprehension
Spelling**

Outline of Concerns

Details of existing differentiated approach in English

Details of targeted approach in Irish

Parents' Signatures _____

Teachers' Signatures _____

Date: _____

Date of Next Meeting

Certificate of Exemption from the Study of Irish
Kilbrittain National School, Kilbrittain, Co.
Cork Roll No: 14116V

Circular 0052/2019

Name of pupil: _____

Date of birth: _____

The above-named pupil has been granted an exemption from the study of Irish in accordance with the terms of Circular 0052/2019 and on the grounds of the following exceptional circumstance (please tick as appropriate):

2.2 a. The pupil received his/her education up to 12 years of age (or up to and including the final year of primary education outside the state and where he/she did not have opportunity to engage in the study of Irish.

2.2 b. The pupil was previously enrolled as a recognised pupil in primary school and is being re-enrolled after a period of not less than three consecutive years spent abroad and is 12 years of age on re enrolment.

2.2 c. The pupil has at least reached second class and presents with significant learning difficulties that are persistent despite having had access to targeted intervention to support language and literacy learning in both Irish and English over time and presents with a standardised score on a discrete test in either Word Reading, Reading Comprehension or Spelling at/below the 10th percentile.

2.2d. The pupil is the child of a Foreign National who is/is diplomatic or consular representatives in Ireland.

Possible implications of exemption from the study of Irish for my son/daughter have been explained to me.

Signed: _____
Parent/Guardian

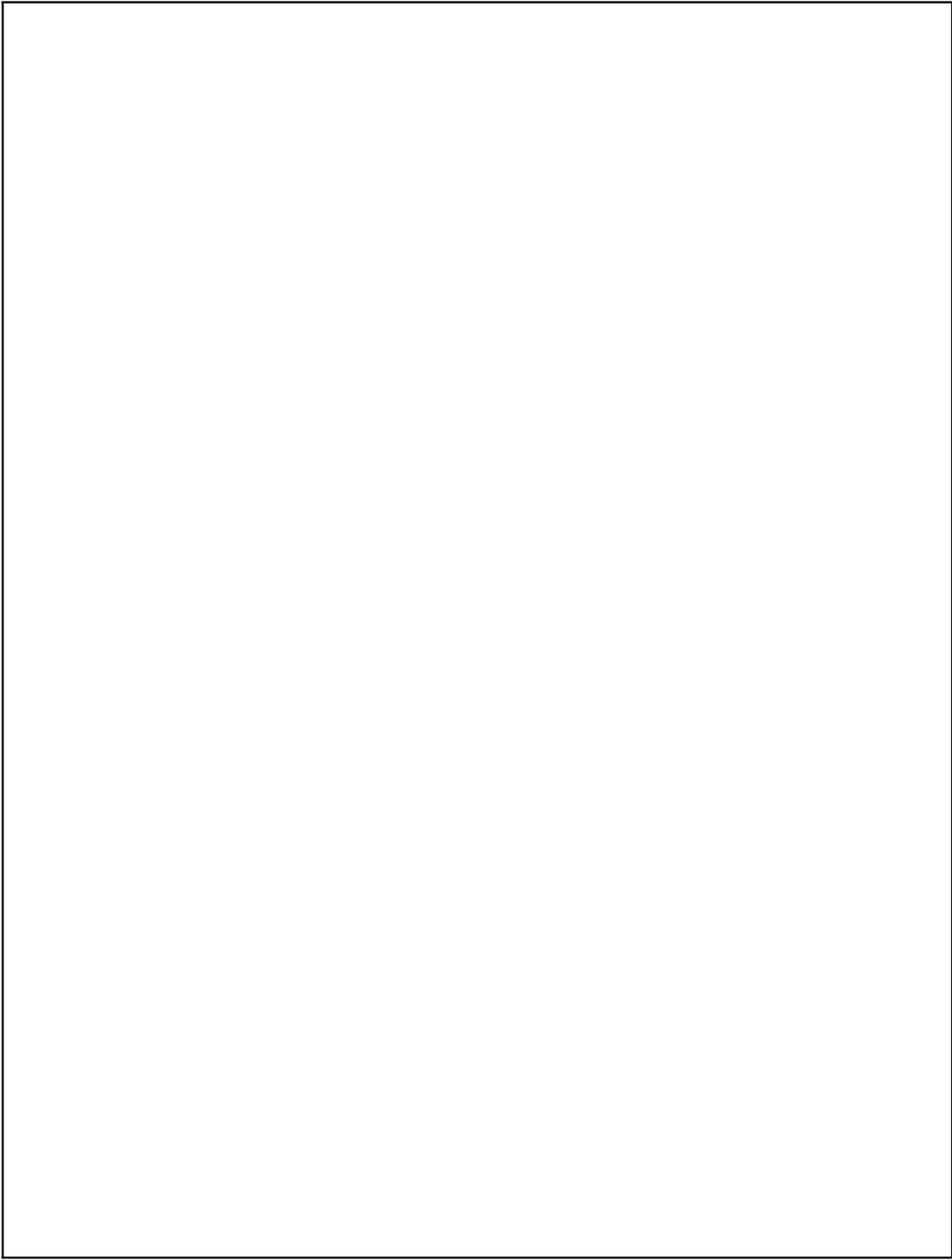
Signed: _____
Parent/Guardian

Date _____

Date: _____

Signed: _____
School Principal

Date: ____



Irish Exemption Appeal Committee

Name of Pupil

Date of Birth

Name of School

School Address

School Roll No.

Please Indicate the Sub paragraph in Circular 52/2019 on which the application to the school was based.

2.2a: pupils whose education up to 12 years of age (or up to and including the final year of primary education) was received outside the state and where they did not have opportunity to engage in the study of Irish.

2.2b: pupils who were previously enrolled as a recognised pupils in primary schools who are being re-enrolled after a period spent abroad, provided that at least three consecutive years have elapsed since the previous enrolment in the state and are at least 12 years of age on re-enrolment.

2.2c: pupils who have at least reached second class and present with significant and persistent learning difficulties and present with a Standardised Score in a discrete test at/below the 10th percentile in either Word Reading, Reading Comprehension or Spelling.

2.2d: children of Foreign National who is/are diplomatic or consular Representatives in Ireland.

Date of application to the school for an exemption from the study of Irish:

Date of written confirmation of the school's decision not to grant an exemption:

Please state the rationale for this appeal:

Signed: _____

Date: _____
