



ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EAL) POLICY

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Some pupils and their families may have English as an Additional Language (EAL). As is documented across all educational settings, the proportion of pupils and families with EAL continues to grow and the range of home languages spoken by pupils, or their families is becoming increasingly diverse.

This diversity is viewed positively by all at our school as it brings an opportunity to open pupils, staff and families to new cultural experiences and break down social barriers.

We recognise the additional support needs that may exist for pupils and families with EAL and aim to address these proactively.

2.0 AIMS

We believe that:

- all pupils are entitled to equal access to the curriculum
- forming and maintaining strong links with parents/ carers is fundamental to our pupils' learning and development
- learning and using more than one language is an asset and provides a learning opportunity for our pupils and staff
- promoting development in a pupil's home language will have a positive impact on their development in other languages.

3.0 POTENTIAL BARRIERS

There are potential difficulties when working with pupils with EAL in addition to their social, emotional, and mental health difficulties and individual learning needs.

3.1 Identifying Language Difficulties

At The Willows we distinguish language difficulties that are consistent with typical EAL development from those that represent disordered communication development.

Whether or not they have EAL, many pupils at the school experience some form of communication impairment, consistent with their individual learning needs. Accurate assessment of a pupil's receptive and expressive language skills must take into account EAL status and good practice guidelines.

3.2 Supporting pupils with complex communication needs and EAL

- helping pupils to understand the language of the classroom and express their wants, needs, feelings, and opinions
- pupils who are EAL may have English language difficulties that impact on their ability to understand instructions, information, or conversation and to express themselves clearly to English speaking adults and peers

- some of our pupils may have autism and related communication difficulties which may be compounded by learning EAL
- many of the methods used to develop communication skills across the whole school will support those pupils with EAL.

3.3 Daily Support

The Department for Education has produced comprehensive working documents on how best to support pupils for whom English is an additional language. There are several strategies to teach language meaningfully, moving from the early stages of language development through to complex linguistic concepts. The themes throughout DfE resources are in line with the strategies we aim to use in school as part of the daily planning and delivery.

Examples of recommended strategies:

- use gesture/visuals/objects
- model social conventions
- ensure the pupil knows the names of staff
- differentiate lessons to each pupil's language capability.

3.4 Supporting Families

- families of children with additional needs may have come across outdated advice about avoiding use of the home language
- all staff must reassure families that current guidance says families should provide the best language model by speaking the language in which they are most fluent
- establishing strong links with families in spite of language barriers is a priority
- a child is best supported when families and school staff work together closely. We will strive to develop, maintain and strengthen our links with families.
- when working with families with EAL, existing language barriers must be addressed in order to optimise a pupil's progress.

4.0 DATA GATHERING

As part of the admissions process to our school, parents and carers are asked to disclose their child's ethnicity, home language, first language and religion. This enables us to support families and the pupil appropriately.

5.0 RESPECTING DIVERSITY

The Willows School places huge value on a child developing as an individual according to their religious, cultural, and personal beliefs. We aim to work with children and their families to support this. The school community can develop understanding and awareness of their own and other pupils' or staff members' linguistic and social cultures through a range of events including:

- cultural days and theme weeks
- culturally diverse assemblies
- trips to culturally related places in the community, e.g., gurdwara, mosque, synagogue, church
- working closely with parents of pupils to understand the perception of special needs in their culture
- displaying work completed by pupils on different languages and social cultures
- ensuring resources used in class activities reflect a range of ethnicities, e.g. ensuring we provide access to a range of books in various languages.

6.0 RECRUITMENT

The school will employ staff irrespective of their home language. Staff are not required to disclose their home language. All staff are interviewed prior to employment at which point we identify whether their proficiency in English is suitable for the post applied for. Some staff might use EAL and may be able to converse with a child/ family in a different language as needed. Staff can act as positive role models for children who may be self-conscious that English is not their first language.

7.0 TRANSLATION

Through links with the local communities and families we will be able to access information on recommended local contacts who may act as translators for pupils and families, if considered appropriate.

Parents/ Carers are also welcomed to involve personal translators, whether professional, friends or family members to support their child. Personal translators might accompany families to annual reviews and parents evening to support communication between Parents/ Carers and school.