

EAL (ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE) POLICY

At Tonbridge School, we recognise that all boys with English as an additional language (EAL) may have differing degrees of difficulty with language at some time in their School career and that provision for this need is on a continuum. We regard the boys' self-esteem to be of vital importance to their learning and intend that boys should not feel stigmatised by the fact that they do not have English as their first language. Teachers aim to ensure that all boys for whom English is an additional language have the chance to achieve their maximum potential.

Tonbridge School looks carefully at all aspects of a boy's performance in different areas of learning and development or subjects to establish whether lack of progress is due to limitations in his command of English or if it arises from a Special Educational Need (SEN) or a disability. Difficulties related solely to limitations in English as an additional language are not a SEN.

The role of the EAL Coordinator (currently Head of EAL)

The duties of the EAL Coordinator are as follows:

Maintaining EAL records on PASS and Firefly of boys for whom English is not their first language;

- Assessing of boys' level of language on arrival;
- Consulting with Admissions and academic staff on the question of placement in mainstream classes appropriate to their ability and language level;
- Providing additional English language teaching through activities specific to the individual boy's needs;
- Developing social skills through conversation and group work; enabling each individual to access the academic language, culture and study skills necessary for full participation in the curriculum;
- Preparing EAL boys for the IELTS Test to support their university applications;
- Liaising with parents and guardians and assisting with communication between home and school;
- Liaising with academic and pastoral staff when individual learning or pastoral needs become apparent;
- Observing EAL boys in mainstream lessons from time to time;
- Providing INSET and feedback to staff to ensure that colleagues have an understanding of EAL boys' needs and resources to provide for them.

The EAL Co-ordinator works with another qualified EAL teacher to meet the needs of each individual EAL boy. This is at no additional cost to parents.

Identification, assessment and review

We aim to assess a boy's language level as soon as possible. When a new boy arrives, tests are carried out to ascertain the boy's level of proficiency in the four skill areas of reading, writing, listening and speaking. Where possible, the boy is then placed in classes according to his academic and linguistic ability. The results of the initial diagnostic test are made known to all subject teachers so that they are aware of any difficulties the boy may encounter within his classroom. If it becomes apparent that a boy requires additional EAL input this need is met by offering one-to-one support. Subject teachers will raise any concerns they have about an EAL boy with the Head of EAL. Progress is monitored both informally and formally by EAL teachers, subject teachers, Heads of Departments and Housemasters and regular termly EAL reports are sent home to parents. Appropriate special arrangements in examinations will be sought for boys for whom English is an additional language, if necessary.

Gifted and Talented boys

We recognise that boys for whom English is an additional language may well be both gifted and/or talented. If it is found that a boy's lack of English is hindering a boy from progressing to the best of his ability, additional EAL lessons can be provided to address the problem.

Curriculum

The School has a responsibility to ensure that each boy has access to a broad and balanced curriculum and teachers have a responsibility to provide effective learning opportunities for all boys, including EAL boys, by providing relevant and appropriately challenging work.

All teachers (with support from the EAL Department) are therefore expected to:

- set suitable learning challenges;
- respond to boys' language needs;
- overcome potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of boys;
- liaise with parents and other agencies (e.g. guardians) if necessary.

Teachers should, for example,

- build upon boys' experiences of language at home and in the wider community, so that they are able to develop their English and other languages in parallel;
- encourage and ensure boys' active involvement in all classroom activities;
- ensure that vocabulary work covers technical as well as everyday meanings of words;
- explain how speaking and writing in English are structured for different purposes;
- provide a range of reading materials that highlight different ways in which English is used;
- ensure there are many opportunities for talking, and that talking effectively supports writing;
- encourage boys to transfer their knowledge, skills and understanding from one language to another.

Classroom activities will be differentiated by task, outcome, resources and adult support, to assist each boy to make progress in line with expectations.

The School does not at any point segregate EAL boys into separate groups for teaching mainstream subjects, as research has shown that this is not in the best interests of the boys' progress in either their English or their subject knowledge. Those boys who need extra EAL tuition are withdrawn from one (in rare cases two) mainstream lesson(s) per week in the lower years, and the EAL teacher takes care to ensure that each boy does not miss too many lesson periods from any one academic subject, and entirely avoids English or other subjects where it would be difficult for the boy to catch up what he has missed. In the Sixth Form EAL boys attend one EAL / IELTS lesson per week in study periods or in their own time.

Parents with EAL

Parents can use a nominated person to act as translator in Parents' Evenings and consultations with the boy's teachers. They can also nominate a primary contact for written communication from the School, if specifically requested.

Integration

Teachers endeavor to ensure that all boys are fully integrated into whole School life. The School provides social and pastoral support for EAL boys in a variety of ways, overseen by the International Coordinator and assistants. EAL boys are allocated a 'buddy' on arrival to help them settle in to School life, and a variety of extra activities are provided throughout the School year for boys whose parents live abroad.