

EAL English as an Additional Language Parent Handbook



Helping English Language Learners to Flourish

Taipei European School
British Primary Section

2021-2022



Why is English as an Additional Language important at TES?

All students have a right to a broad and balanced education in order to flourish. As a school with a population of transient students from a range of cultures, some students may require English as an Additional Language (EAL) support in order to access the curriculum and reach their potential. It is the aim of the BPS EAL department to equip students with the English language skills they need to access the mainstream curriculum and the interpersonal communication skills they need to function socially and academically, both inside and outside of the classroom.

All decisions concerning a student's level of EAL support or status will be made by the EAL support teacher in collaboration with the child's class teacher.

Please note that EAL support is not optional. If your child is identified as requiring support, their place in the school is dependent upon them receiving this support.

How does the EAL team support EAL learners?

Support for EAL learners is provided through a combination of intensive sessions, in-class and withdrawal support.

EYE (Early Years Enrichment)

Learning through play, talk and meaningful experiences are especially important for the youngest children. The EAL department supports all English language learners in the BPS Reception classes with an embedded enrichment teacher who works alongside the class teachers to encourage and support children in the Early Years.

SIEAL (Super Intensive EAL Support)

Children who are new to learning English may require additional, intensive language support in order to develop their functional vocabulary in speaking, listening and understanding. This will involve being withdrawn from the mainstream classroom at additional times. Children work with a specialist intensive EAL teacher. They will transition into the regular EAL programme as soon as they have a firm foundation in English. Please note there is an additional charge for SIEAL support.

Withdrawal

Withdrawal lessons take place on a daily basis, at an appropriate time during the school day. These lessons are planned by the specialist EAL teacher and are based around supporting access to the mainstream curriculum and helping children work towards their individual English language goals

In-class

The EAL support teacher provides support in the mainstream classroom which may include the provision of additional materials relevant to the lesson to scaffold learning, working with students one-to-one or working with a small group. This support is centred around the class lesson plan and is organised in collaboration with the class teacher.

Frontloading

EAL children are pre-taught specific academic vocabulary and/or phrases that allow them to better access mainstream classroom discussion. This is usually carried out during a withdrawal class. More details about academic frontloading can be found at the back of this booklet.

How are children assessed for EAL support?

All students joining TES are assessed prior to entry by the school's admissions team. In addition, there is a two-week assessment period at the beginning of the school year in which all four language areas (listening, speaking, reading, writing) are assessed. The EAL team continue to regularly monitor and assess student progress and provide ongoing feedback and next steps to students.

Assessment tools include:

- observations and conversations about learning
- reading and comprehension
- phonics and spelling
- oral proficiency
- continuous formative assessment
- student self and peer assessment

How are EAL learning goals set and reviewed?

Students receiving EAL support are assessed and monitored using the NASSEA EAL Assessment Framework Steps. You can find an at-a-glance version of the EAL Steps of the back of this handbook.

Students receive an EALIPS (EAL Individual Plan of Support) with personalised language learning goals for each semester. The EALIPS goals are shared with students and they are encouraged and guided to add their own language learning goal. The EALIPS are reviewed mid-way through and at the end of each semester. It is important that students play an active part in setting and evaluating their EALIPS and clearly understand their next steps. Please take time to discuss the learning goals with your child.

Parents will also receive updated EAL steps via each child's academic school report and ILR during the year.

For 2021-22, the semester dates are as follows:

- Semester 1: August 24th – December 17th
- Semester 2: January 10th – June 24th

How long will my child need EAL support?

Speaking English fluently in social situations does not mean that English learning has finished. Your child's conversational English might be much better than their academic English. The classroom and EAL support teacher's decision to keep your child on or take your child off EAL Support is based on their academic English and their performance in the classroom.

While conversational English can be learned in 1-2 years, research shows that it might take 5-7 years to catch up fully with the academic language needed for success in school. Even after your child is no longer receiving EAL support, they will still be an EAL learner.

At TES, students exit the EAL programme and join the mainstream classroom when they are secure at Step 5 on the EAL steps. Some students will achieve beyond Step 5 in some areas. Students in Year 6 who are transitioning to the high school may need to achieve Step 6 to ensure they are ready for the additional academic challenges of secondary education. All students will be closely monitored as they transition after exit.

Academic frontloading and the importance of using your home language

Research has shown that children who have a strong foundation in their first language are more successful in becoming competent users of a second or third language.

Speaking to your child in your mother tongue stimulates their depth of language, enhances cognitive skills and helps them to make connections between what they have learned at school and their background knowledge in their first language.

We seek to make the most of your specialist skills as an expert speaker of your child's first language to help them improve their understanding of English.

Each week, your child will bring home vocabulary which we would like you to help us 'frontload' (pre-teach) ready for the following week. In class, your child will learn these words with the EAL teacher. Some words might be entirely new; some words might be review words. They will then bring home their vocabulary book.

We would like your help at home to:

- Discuss the meaning of the words in your child's first language
- Write down the meaning of the words in your child's first language
- Help your child say these words aloud
- Encourage your child to say each word in a sentence

We would like to stress that these words are not spelling words and may not be appropriate for them to learn to spell. Our aim is to help boost your child's understanding and enable them to have greater access to the wider curriculum during the following week.

Your child's EAL teacher will inform your child which day the vocabulary book is to be returned to school each week.

If you are not sure of the meaning of a word or how it is used in different contexts, or if you have any questions about this programme please do not hesitate to contact your child's EAL teacher.

Reading A-Z (Raz Kids)

All EAL learners are automatically enrolled on the Reading A-Z (Raz Kids) online reading platform. This provides all students learning English a new and exciting way to develop their reading, understanding and comprehension skills, both at home and school.

You will receive additional information from your child's EAL teacher about how your child can access Raz Kids, as well as the option to sign up for weekly reading progress reports to help support your child's learning at home. EAL teachers will regularly feedback to students on their progress and assist with next steps.

Raz Kids has a proven track record in helping EAL students who read regularly to make excellent progress with books and texts that link directly to the school's curriculum to support their learning.

It is recommended that students read for 10-15 minutes every day using the following approach: *Listen to the book > Read the book independently > Take the quiz.*

How is EAL support paid for?

EAL support is a value-added service and incurs an additional charge. Billing takes place twice a year at the beginning of each semester. Children receiving EAL support who are deemed ready to exit the EAL programme will be exited at one of two points in the academic year; either at the **end of Semester 1** or the **end of Semester 2**.

Students who receive only in-class EAL support and already attend CLC (Chinese) lessons can exit the EAL programme at the end of any given calendar month. The balance of any remaining full months' fees will be credited to your school account.

For 2021-22, the fee structure is as follows:

- EAL support fee - **NT\$79,200** per semester
- SIEAL support fee - **NT\$110,000** per semester

SIEAL (Super Intensive EAL) targets students whose English level is below school admissions requirements and the EAL student cohort for that year-level. SIEAL support aims to ensure that students can access the curriculum with EAL support and is individualised and provided one-to-one or in very small groups. Students who transition from SIEAL to EAL will also receive the balance of any additional full months' fees as credit to their school account.

All EAL support queries should be addressed to the EAL department rather than the Finance department.

How can you help?

Research shows that a strong first language is very important to a child's and academic, personal and social development. Helping your child continue to develop their native language is extremely important and will help them in learning English.

- Talk and read with your child every day to help support their understanding. Give them time to express themselves as well as asking them to explain their thinking.
- All EAL students have access to Raz Kids to support reading and comprehension at home and school.
- Support with homework - discuss using your first language and English.
- Provide your child with rest, opportunities for play and real-life experiences such as the park, beach, shops. Encourage your child to ask questions.

How can you communicate with the EAL department?

EAL support teachers work with specific year-groups and are available for appointments during all parent-teacher meetings. They will send EALIPs to parents via email and can be contacted via email for any queries or additional meeting requests, either in person or via video call during the academic year. You will receive a welcome letter from your child's EAL teacher at the beginning of the academic year. We welcome an ongoing dialogue about student learning.

Any additional queries can be sent to the Head of EAL, Peter Collier. You can set up a meeting by calling the TES telephone number: +886-2-8145-9007 or emailing peter.collier@tes.tp.edu.tw

The EAL department is committed to working in partnership with colleagues, parents and students to ensure that all EAL learners at Taipei European School flourish.

Questions and Answers:

Q What is the difference between EAL, ESL, ELL and EFL?

A English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students learn English as a subject, generally for business and/or pleasure purposes. In EFL, English is taught as a stand-alone subject. At TES (BPS), EAL aims to support students who are learning in and through English across all learning areas. EAL is sometimes also referred to as ESL or ELL.

Q How often will my child receive an EALIPS?

A Students receive their EALIPS each semester. There is a review at the middle of and end of each semester.

Q When can my child exit the EAL programme?

A Students who receive withdrawal EAL lessons only exit the EAL programme at the end of a semester. Students who do not attend EAL withdrawal lessons can exit at the end of any given calendar month.

Q What EAL Step does my child need to exit the EAL programme?

A Students need to be secure at Step 5 in the areas of listening and understanding, speaking, reading and writing. Students in Year 6 who are transitioning to the High School may need to achieve Step 6 due to the increase in academic English they will encounter in Year 7.

Q Should I speak my home language?

A Yes. There is a growing body of research that shows students who are exposed to their home language become more proficient in an additional language.

Q What should I do if I have a question about EAL support at TES?

A Please reach out to us by phone or email, no matter how small your question seems. We are committed to ensuring that all EAL learners at TES flourish.

