

EAL (ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE) POLICY

At Tonbridge School, we celebrate multilingualism and the great value that boys from a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds contribute to school life. Most of our pupils are already very good users of the English language before entry to the school, but we recognise that, while using at least two languages regularly is of great benefit to the development of the brain, in the teenage years boys may not have acquired a complete mastery of the advanced academic language needed to excel in all their public exams: research shows that full competence will usually only be reached by the late teens. Nonetheless, we encourage multilingual boys to be proud of their linguistic abilities and not to feel downhearted if they make the odd mistake.

The British Government's definition of an EAL pupil is one who regularly uses a language other than English in school or home life, regardless of which language is defined as the 'first' or 'main' language. This definition obviously covers a wide range of competence in English, and thus at Tonbridge we prefer to assess a boy's proficiency in academic English, rather than just his EAL status, on entry to the school, and to monitor the linguistic development of all EAL pupils throughout their life here, so that no boy is held back academically by a language level that is insufficient for him to achieve his full potential.

We regard enabling EAL pupils to improve their proficiency in academic English as an integral part of the job of ALL subject teachers in the school. Research shows that the teaching practices that are needed for EAL pupils are also best practice for monolingual (non-EAL) pupils, as multilingual pupils will not be the only ones to need help with their (mainly written) English. Advice on differentiation for EAL pupils is available from the EAL Department and summarised on the SEND and EAL Lists on Firefly. EAL staff run training sessions for classroom teachers as part of the school's professional development programme. All staff are expected to help with correcting mistakes in English on individual pupils' work, whatever their linguistic background.

It is extremely rare for a boy at this school to be eligible for special access arrangements (extra time and / or a bilingual dictionary) in public examinations on EAL grounds alone. This is because most boys will have spent at least three years using English as their main language at school and home by the time they come to take their GCSEs. The EAL Department will advise on individual cases as necessary. Limitations in English due solely to a pupil being EAL do not count as a special educational need. SEND issues will therefore be investigated separately by the Learning Strategies Department.

EAL assessment and tuition is offered at no additional cost to parents.

THE ROLE OF THE EAL CO-ORDINATOR (HEAD OF LS AND EAL)

The duties of the EAL Co-ordinator, assisted by the EAL staff, are as follows:

- Maintaining records on the EAL list accessible for all staff on Firefly of boys for whom English is not their only fluent language;
- assessing the boys' English language level on arrival;
- consulting with Admissions and academic staff on the question of placement in mainstream classes appropriate to their ability and English language level;
- providing additional English language teaching as required through work specific to an individual boy's needs;
- developing social skills and confidence through conversation and group work;
- enabling each individual to access the academic language, culture and study skills necessary for full participation in the school's curriculum;

- monitoring the progress of EAL boys in mainstream subjects via reports, progress tests and exam results;
- 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 to monitor progress;
- preparing those EAL boys who need it for the IELTS Test to support their university applications;
- providing INSET and feedback to staff to ensure that colleagues have an understanding of EAL boys' needs and good methods and resources available to provide for them.

IDENTIFICATION, ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW

We aim to assess a new boy's English language level as soon as possible, taking into account baseline data from his entrance examination and information supplied during the Novi Visit, but bearing in mind that his language level is likely to have improved since then. When he arrives in September, assessments are carried out to ascertain his level of proficiency in the four skill areas of reading, writing, listening and speaking. The results of the initial diagnostic tests are made known to all subject teachers via the EAL List, so that they are aware of any difficulties the boy may encounter in the classroom. If it becomes apparent that he requires additional EAL input, this need is met by offering one-to-one support. Relatively few of the EAL boys will be likely to need this. Subject teachers will raise any concerns they have about an EAL boy with the EAL Department at any point during his school career. Staff have access to an EAL referral form found within the Learning Strategies pages on Firefly. The referral form provides the teacher with the opportunity to identify the specific need but also allows them to have access to a number of strategies that may prove to be effective in managing the identified need. The Head of Learning Strategies receives the referral and then shares with the EAL teachers for further action. 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.

GIFTED AND TALENTED BOYS WITH EAL

We recognise that boys for whom English is an additional language may well be 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 (perhaps allowing shorter-length essays to begin with, for example);
- respond to EAL boys' English language needs, especially supplying relevant vocabulary and correcting repeated wrong usage on written work;
- overcome potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of boys;
- encourage an atmosphere where it is perfectly all right to try things out and make mistakes;
- liaise with parents and other agencies (e.g. guardians) as necessary.

Teachers should, for example:

- refer to and 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;
- explicitly teach new vocabulary and switch often between technical and everyday meanings of words
- explain how speaking and writing in English are structured for different purposes;
- provide scaffolds or writing frames, especially for boys who are less experienced in writing essays;
- 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, which may sometimes involve working bilingually in class.

Classroom activities will be differentiated by task, outcome, resources and peer or 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 very 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. IELTS is a qualification in the English language that some EAL boys may need to take for their university application to be accepted. This varies from university to university, and so advice should be taken from the EAL department and the Universities and Careers Department when an EAL boy reaches the Sixth Form.

PARENTS WITH EAL

Parents are encouraged to contact the EAL Department or the relevant Housemaster or Tutor if they have any concerns about how well their son is integrating into life at Tonbridge School or about the level of support he needs in his English language learning. We have a variety of ways in which we can help and would never want a boy to struggle alone with his difficulties. We believe it is very important to keep channels of communication open between school and home, and so any parents who have EAL themselves are welcome to ask for extra help with translation. Parents may use a nominated person of their own choice to act as translator in Parents' Evenings and consultations with teachers. They can also nominate a primary contact for written communication from the school. A number of the languages more frequently used by the school's EAL learners are also spoken by some of our teachers, and these might be available to help. Requests should be made to the Housemaster in the first instance.

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.