**[School Letterhead]**

**Draft EAL (English as an Additional Language) Policy**

**Introduction**

Athlone Community College (ACC) aims to maintain and promote an inclusive school environment which reflects our values and affirms our linguistic, ethnic and cultural diversity as set out in our school plan. ACC promotes parental involvement, provides equality of curriculum access and facilitates professional development opportunities both in whole-school and classroom practice. Pupils are also encouraged and facilitated to maintain a connection with their own culture and language through curricular activities and displays.

Rationale

**Aims**

* To develop oral, reading and written English language competency for identified students, to a standard that is comparable to that of their peers for whom English is their sole language of communication and in keeping with the capability of the student.
* To provide specific preparatory courses for visiting students who have the intention of completing the Cambridge English, or equivalent exam at an external centre.
* To facilitate EAL students in their English language competence and to assist in his/her integration into the life of the school and the English language community of his/her locality.
* Teachers also endeavour to develop the students’ sense of self-esteem.

**Provision of EAL Support**

All students who have been identified as having an EAL need may be provided EAL support for up to two years without assessment. However, any student requiring EAL support beyond two years must be assessed to establish need.

**The role of the EAL support teacher**

The EAL pupil remains the responsibility of the subject specialist teachers who will work closely with the EAL support teacher.

* In collaboration with parents and mainstream/subject specific class teachers, EAL support teachers identify pupils requiring additional language support, assess pupils’ proficiency in English using the suitable assessment materials
* Devise appropriate language programmes, deliver the programmes and record and monitor pupils’ progress
* They share their expertise with subject specific teachers and assist in developing and disseminating good practice to support the development of students’ English language proficiency

It is recommended that pupils receive additional EAL support teaching in timetabled EAL lessons for small groups, in addition to the support they receive from the class teachers. Clear and effective arrangements for the identification of pupils requiring support, the assessment of pupils’ levels of language proficiency, programme planning, recording and monitoring of pupils’ progress and communication with parents are key features of effective EAL support provision.

**Role of the Class Teacher**

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all students in her class including those in receipt of Language support. In supporting the development and implementation of the school plan on language support the class teacher should:

• Share their planning with the language support teacher to identify the language needs of the individual students

• Differentiate the classroom programmes for the EAL student in keeping with the agreed targets and activities

• Modify presentation and questioning techniques to maximise the involvement of students with English as a second language

• Place emphasis on oral language development across the curriculum

• Set learning targets at an appropriate level

• Ensure a high level of consultation and co-operation with the language support teacher

**Pupils requiring EAL support**

Pupils requiring EAL can be categorised as follows:

**Resident Pupils** – students enrolled fulltime in ACC for whom English is not their first language. These students will be assessed on entry to school using the NCCA Post-primary Assessment programme, and will receive EAL support either in small groups or individually, depending on need.

**Visiting/Exchange Pupils** – pupils enrolled for the school year who have come to ACC to improve their language proficiency in English. These pupils will typically receive EAL support within a group setting and follow the Cambridge English programme.

**Assessment**

**Resident Pupils**

For the purpose of assessment, EAL support teachers in ACC employ the Post-Primary Assessment Kit provided by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) to determine the initial language proficiency of each pupil and to evaluate how well pupils are progressing with their language skills in English. The tests will help to establish a pupil’s level of English on arrival in school, monitor progress over time in language support and identify the point at which a pupil no longer requires additional language support. ACC. recognises that assessments need to be sensitive to the age, language and culture of the EAL learner.

**Visiting/Exchange Pupils**

A.C.C. currently does not facilitate the sitting of Cambridge examinations. However, pupils will have their progress monitored throughout the school term using Cambridge English teaching and assessment materials, and teachers will provide students with quality feedback on their results.

**The table below outlines the levels of proficiency that were used when assessing pupils’ language ability prior to the publication of the Primary/Post–Primary Assessment Kits. The table also includes the nearest equivalent levels for those schools using the Primary/Post-Primary Assessment Kits.**

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| **Proficiency levels used prior to publication of Primary and Post–Primary Assessment Kits** |
| Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 |
| Very poor comprehension of English and very limited spoken English | Understands some English and can speak English sufficiently well for basic communication | Has competent communication skills in English  |

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| **Nearest equivalent levels using Primary and Post-Primary Assessment Kits** |
| Level 0 | Level A1 | Level A2 | Level B1 |
| Absence of any English language proficiency | Can understand and use basic words and phrases in a social and school context | Can understand, read and write simple English and can speak English sufficiently well to exchange information | Can function well enough in English to be fully integrated into the mainstream classroom |

**N.B**. Pupils with very little English may be initially assessed as at Level 0 (see Primary Assessment Kit, p.16 and Kit, p.12). Level A1 in the Assessment Kit should be their first learning target. Once the EAL student’s proficiency level has been identified, suitable teaching methodologies are employed to accommodate the student’s level.**The Board of Management of Athlone Community College are committed to reviewing this policy within 3 years.**Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_On behalf of Board of ManagementSigned: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Ms Eileen Donohoe, Principal |