English As an Additional Language (EAL) Policy

Version Number
• 1

Applies To
• APTCOO Independent Special School

Associated Documents
• Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
• Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy

Related Regulations
• **Statutory Guidance, National curriculum in England**: Framework for key stages 1 to 4, Updated 2 December 2014
• **SEND Code of Practice 2014**
• **DfE: Staff' Standards** Guidance for school leaders, school staff and governing bodies July 2011 (introduction updated June 2013)
• **Education Inspection Framework (EIF) from Ofsted**
• NASSEA The Northern Association of Support Services for Equality of achievement. http://www.nassea.org.uk/eal-assessment-framework/

Review Frequency
• Every 2 Years

Date of Implementation
• Autumn 2024

Review Date
• Autumn 2026

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Date 5/12/24	Chair of Board of Trustees /Governing Board Date 5/12/24

Contents

1. Introduction

APTCOO is an independent special school and short breaks provider that caters for learners with a diagnosis of Autism and related Special Educational Needs. We therefore believe that the development of language and literacy skills is of the highest priority, as language is the main tool of learning and communication in all aspects of school life and the world beyond. At APTCOO all of our learners are important, and this applies to all aspects of their education – their teaching and learning, their achievements, their attitudes and their well-being. We encourage all of our learners to aim for the highest possible standards, and we take account of each child or young person's individual needs and experiences.

We celebrate children or young people and young people who are bi-lingual, and some multi-lingual children or young people are able to participate fully in all areas of the curriculum and the APTCOO community. However, a number of children or young people may join APTCOO from various parts of the world, for a variety of reasons and with a variety of levels of competence in English.

In this policy, the term 'English as an Additional Language' (EAL) refers to learners whose main language at home is a language other than English.

Learners with EAL will face various difficulties throughout their academic life. Learners' aptitude for English will vary, but many will face barriers to learning, accessing the curriculum and reaching their full potential. Learners with EAL must learn in and through another language. In addition, they may come from different cultural backgrounds to their peers and face different expectations of language, education and learning.

Research suggests that those new to English will acquire conversational fluency within two years but will need five years or longer to achieve competence in academic English. In addition, our learners have special educational needs identified in their EHCP. This policy has been established to ensure all learners with EAL at APTCOO are given the best chance possible to reach their full potential.

We aim to:

- Welcome the cultural, linguistic and educational experiences learners with EAL contribute to APTCOO.
- Ensure strategies are in place to support learners with EAL.
- Enable learners with EAL to become confident, and to acquire the language skills needed to reach their full academic potential.

Our strategic objectives are to:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for newly arrived learners with EAL.
- Effectively Assess the skills and needs of learners with EAL.
- Gather accurate information regarding children or young people's backgrounds, cultures and abilities.
- Equip staff with the necessary skills, resources and knowledge to support learners with EAL.
- Use all available resources to raise the attainment of learners with EAL.
- Systematically monitor learners' progress and adapt policies and procedures accordingly.
- Maximise opportunities to model the fluent use of English.
- Link their EAL needs with their SEND to provide bespoke support for learners
- Recognise some learners may also present as 'non-verbal' and require a pictorial communication system to help them to access learning.

2. Staff responsible for learners with EAL

The Headteacher is responsible for learners with EAL and is supported by the delivery team. Their responsibilities include:

- The induction of newly arrived learners.
- Coordinating the efficient timetabling of learners with EAL.
- Overseeing the assessment and targeting of children or young people with EAL.
- Ensuring the procurement and appropriate use of resources to support learners with EAL.
- Aiding staff in effective communication with parents and finding translators where appropriate. ⯑ Exploring various possibilities to ensure important information is shared with parents.
- Advising on strategies to support and include learners with EAL.
- Providing advice regarding inclusive curriculum materials.
- Advising on ways to differentiate work for learners with EAL.
- Encouraging and supporting learners to maintain and develop their first language.
- Developing relationships between APTCOO and parents of learners with EAL.
- Securing and providing training to ensure staff development, including INSET courses.
- EAL students, where possible, will be given the opportunity to take formal examinations in their home language if appropriate.

3. The role of school staff members

All staff members have a responsibility to ensure the development of learners with EAL.

They will meet this responsibility by:
- Ensuring all written work includes the technical requirements of language as well as the meaning.
- Providing a good model of spoken English.
- Where possible, using a variety of types of text to explore their subject and through the varied use of English.

- Ensuring the inclusion of learners with EAL in their classrooms.
- Identifying learners with EAL who are experiencing difficulties and ensuring intervening measures are taken to aid the learner.

4. Support

Where a learner with EAL is assessed as having little to no English, support will be provided in the form of bespoke lessons. These lessons focus on practical, everyday English, and will support the wider curriculum. Support and small group work is utilised as soon as the learner can be successfully integrated into a group environment.

5. Inclusion

APTCOO utilises a strategy of inclusion, and the positive and effective use of language. The strategy includes the following principles:

There is an understanding throughout APTCOO, for both staff and learners, that a limited knowledge of English does not reflect a lack of ability or knowledge. Appreciating a learner's ability to speak their own first language is essential for building their confidence and self-esteem.

- The language development of learners is the responsibility of the entire school community.
- Diversity will be valued, and learning spaces will be socially inclusive.
- Delivery staff will be knowledgeable about learners' abilities in English and use their knowledge to inform lesson planning.
- Schemes of work may be rewritten to accommodate low levels of English, whilst maintaining the subject content and level of challenge.
- Where large groups of learners with EAL speak the same language, APTCOO encourages wider integration to promote inclusion and to improve learners' understanding of English.

6. Initial assessments

Arrangements will be made for children or young people to be assessed using a recognised EAL assessment tool- the NASSEA EAL Assessment tool- if the initial observation of the learner and family background indicate they have very little understanding and use of English. We also consider the background information gathered during the initial intake and other important factors that may impact on the child or young person's learning and knowledge, e.g.

- Proficiency and achievement in first language
- Prior schooling experience
- Trauma due to other factors
- Health, physical and other characteristics that may impact learning
- Involvement of parents and carers
- Family and cultural values

Children or young people who are learning English as an additional language have skills and knowledge about language similar to monolingual English-speaking children or young people. Their ability to participate in the full curriculum may be in advance of their communicative skills in English.

The assessment has its limitations. The use of the assessment will be considered on the individual basis depending on the SEN needs and the individual communication profile of the learners.

7. Classroom practice

Assessment methods will allow learners to show what they can do in all curriculum areas.

Bilingual dictionaries and electronic translation devices will be made available to aid learners with EAL if required.

Visual supports are utilised where appropriate, e.g. posters, pictures, photos, objects, demonstration, use of gestures.

8. Access to the curriculum

When planning lessons, staff will ensure that:
- The language and learning demands of the curriculum are analysed and support is provided.
- Visual support is utilised to provide greater understanding of key concepts.
- There are opportunities for learners to use their first language in the classroom.
- The support requirements of learners with EAL are identified and the support is made available.

After an initial assessment (NASSEA EAL Assessment tool), if the initial observation of the learner and family background indicate they have very little understanding and use of English, children or young people will be assessed on the following scale:

1. New to English
2. Early acquisition
3. Developing competence
4. Competent
5. Fluent

Staffing levels will ensure that EAL learners receive substantial individual support to make rapid progress in language and access all areas of the curriculum. EAL children or young people's progress will be tracked throughout APTCOO, in discussion between the Headteacher and parents. This will take into consideration the therapeutic and communication needs of the individual.

9. Working with parents and carers

Liaison with parents is vital to the creation of a strong home/school partnership, which can ensure the development of learners with EAL. To aid this partnership, APTCOO will:
- Actively seek to put parents at ease by providing a welcoming environment conducive to productive discussions.
- Provide interpreters for meetings when needed.
- Ensure the language used in letters to parents is clear and straightforward.
- Where appropriate, have staff read through the letter with children or young people before sending the letter home, to ensure the message is clear when appropriate.
- Where necessary, ensure translations of school documents are carried out and provided to parents of learners with EAL.
- Encourage parents to attend parents' meetings and participate in school functions.

10. Special educational needs (SEN)

All learners at APTCOO have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which identifies their primary Special Education Needs, aligned to the SEND Code of Practice 2014.

A child is not regarded to have SEN solely because their home language is different from the language in which they are taught at school.

A proportion of learners with EAL may have one or more types of SEN and it is imperative that this is identified at an early stage. This will be included in their EHCP. Any additional assessments of SEN of learners with EAL will involve EAL specialists along with SEN specialists, where appropriate.

Where appropriate, APTCOO will arrange an assessment in the child's first language.

11. Monitoring progress

The monitoring of learners' progress is shared between all staff and professionals involved, i.e. Speech and Language therapist. Learner profiles are updated following assessments and reviewed on a half- termly basis to reflect the learners current needs. Where learners are deemed to be underachieving, interventions will be put in place to address this, and impact measured

Information from The Bell Foundation

Education Policy: Learners who Use EAL in England

The rich diversity of England's culture, society and language, which has evolved over centuries, is reflected in schools. Many learners arrive at school already speaking more than one language, with English being their second, third or fourth language. This linguistic diversity is accompanied by learners' diversity in prior exposure to English, prior experiences of schooling, their length of residence in England and their social circumstances. Official figures show a marked increase over the last two decades in the number of learners who use English as an Additional Language (EAL). There are almost 1.6 million learners who use EAL in maintained schools in England, a number which has more than doubled since 2006. This makes learners who use EAL a key characteristic of student bodies in many schools.

National data on the numbers of learners who use EAL in schools in England is gathered via APTCOO census. The Department for Education (DfE) records a learner as using EAL if 'they are exposed to a language at home that is known or believed to be other than English.' This means that if a learner is identified as using EAL when they start school at 3-5 years old, they will continue be recorded as an EAL user throughout their education and their life.

EAL in the National Curriculum

There is no specific EAL curriculum, instead the DfE expect that effective teaching and learning for learners using EAL happens through the National Curriculum: Staff must also take account of the needs of learners whose first language is not English. Monitoring of progress should take account of the learner's age, length of time in this country, previous educational experience and ability in other languages.

The ability of learners for whom English is an Additional Language to take part in the national curriculum may be in advance of their communication skills in English. Staff should plan teaching opportunities to help learners develop their English and should aim to provide the support learners need to take part in all subjects. Statutory Guidance, National curriculum in England: Framework for key stages 1 to 4, Updated 2 December 2014

Teacher Standards

The Staff' Standards (2012) state that it is the responsibility of all staff, whatever their subject, to "adapt their teaching to the strengths and needs of all learners". Learners who use EAL are mentioned specifically in Section 5: 'Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all learners', but there is relevance to teaching and learning for EAL learners throughout the standards.

Standard 5 states that staff should '...have a clear understanding of the needs of all learners, including those with special educational needs; those of high ability; those with English as an Additional Language; those with disabilities; and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them.'

Standard 3, which expects a teacher to "demonstrate an understanding of and take responsibility for promoting high standards of literacy, articulacy and the correct use of standard English, whatever the teacher's specialist subject" also goes some way to addressing a need for explicit language teaching but fails to recognise the unique needs of learners using EAL.

DfE: Staff' Standards Guidance for school leaders, school staff and governing bodies July 2011
(introduction updated June 2013)

Education Inspection Framework

The revised Education Inspection Framework (EIF) from Ofsted, which came into effect in 2019, makes no reference to learners who use English as an Additional Language (EAL) as a distinct group. Instead, the Quality of Education judgement focuses on a school's ability to offer high-quality, inclusive education and on the extent to which they construct a curriculum that gives all learners the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.
See the Foundation's article in SecEd on the revised Education Inspection Framework (2019).

NASSEA EAL Assessment tool

EAL Assessment Framework

The Framework is a cross-curricular tool which helps practitioners to observe, document and accelerate the ways bilingual learners start to use English as a tool for learning in school, then continue to develop their use of English through all their subject areas.

It describes the development of communicative behaviour in class and language for learning through listening, speaking, reading and writing. It also includes some aspects of personal development likely to be significant for bilingual learners, such as readiness to speak to others in the classroom.

It is important to note that the framework is not a tool to be used to assess other languages the learner may speak. NASSEA supports the continuing use and development of learners' other languages, and reference is made to using skills in these languages, but this tool is only for assessing English as an Additional Language. The Framework has been developed to help practitioners to become more aware of the progress of their EAL learners through formative assessment.

References:
The Bell Foundation
https://www.bell-foundation.org.uk/eal-programme/guidance/education-policy-learners-who-use-eal-in-england/ (accessed 25/01/21)

Education action zone – examples of school letters translated into different home languages.
http://www.primaryresources.uk/letters/

SEND Code of practice 0-25 2014 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25 (accessed 25/01/21)

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RECORD OF CHANGES – EAL Policy

DATE	AUTHOR	DETAILS OF CHANGE
September 2024	Compliance Lead & Head Teacher	Creation of V1 policy