

EAL (English as an Additional Language) Policy

Category of Policy: Central Education Policy Adapted by School

Willow Tree Park

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Appendices

a) First Language Assessment Form

Introduction

At Willow Tree Park, we recognise that communication and language are at the heart of learning, wellbeing, and inclusion.

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

Students with EAL may face a range of barriers when accessing education. Their level of English proficiency will vary, but many will experience challenges in understanding lessons, engaging with peers, and achieving their full potential. For our learners with autism, severe learning difficulties, or other complex communication needs, these barriers can be even greater.



This policy sets out our procedures for supporting students who come to Willow Tree Park with limited English and significant communication differences. Our aim is to ensure every learner is given the best possible opportunity to communicate, learn, and succeed through a Total Communication Approach, using methods such as PECS, AAC devices, Makaton, LAMP, Intensive Interaction, sensory supports, and dual-language visuals.

We value each student's home language and cultural identity as an important part of who they are. Students are encouraged to use their first language alongside English, helping them to build confidence and strengthen understanding.

- Willow Tree Park aims to:
- Welcome and celebrate the cultural, linguistic, and educational experiences that students with EAL contribute to the school.
- Ensure consistent, evidence-based strategies are in place to support students with EAL and complex communication needs.
- Enable students with EAL to become confident communicators and develop the language skills needed to reach their full academic and personal potential.

Our strategic objectives are to:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for newly arrived students with EAL.
- Assess the communication and language needs of students with EAL using appropriate, sensory and symbol-supported methods.
- Gather accurate information regarding students' backgrounds, cultures, and abilities through collaboration with families.
- Equip staff with the training, skills, and resources to effectively support students with EAL.
- Use all available resources to raise attainment and promote progress for students with EAL.
- Monitor progress systematically and adapt provision to meet individual needs.
- Ensure all students' languages, cultures, and identities are represented throughout the school environment.
- Model fluent communication and English consistently across all settings.
- Recognise and celebrate students' skills in their home languages as well as in English.

Section 1 – Legal framework

This policy has due regard to legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Childcare Act 2006
- Education Act 2002
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- DfE (2014) 'The Equality Act and schools'
- DfE (2018) 'Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children'
- DfE (2018) 'Equality Act 2010: advice for schools'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Supporting Students with Medical Conditions Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Section 2 – Roles and Responsibilities

The governance team will have overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

The headteacher will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that those who are teaching or working with students with EAL are aware of their needs and have arrangements in place to meet them.
- Ensuring that teachers monitor and review students' progress during the academic year.
- Appointing a member of staff to lead on the school's approach to supporting students with EAL.
- Providing the EAL lead with sufficient administrative support and time away from teaching to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities.
- Ensuring that procedures and policies for the day-to-day running of the school do not directly or indirectly discriminate against students with EAL.
- Ensuring that the approach to the curriculum includes how it is made accessible for students with EAL.

The EAL lead will be responsible for:

- The induction of newly arrived students.



- Conducting initial assessments of students with EAL.
- Teaching small groups of students with EAL and providing classroom support.
- Liaising with teaching staff on support for students with EAL.
- Advising on strategies to support and include students with EAL and on ways to differentiate work for students with EAL.
- Encouraging and supporting students to maintain and develop their first language.
- Facilitating students' use of first language national examinations.
- Developing relationships between the school and parents of students with EAL.
- Securing and providing training to ensure staff development.
- Acting as consultants to staff on language-related issues and equal opportunity and race equality issues.
- Ensuring continuity of support and maintaining contact with other professionals involved, as well as parents and students.
- Working closely with the SENCO to develop individual transition plans tailored to the specific needs of children with additional needs.

All staff members will be responsible for:

- 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 students with EAL in their classrooms.
- Identifying students with EAL who are experiencing difficulties and ensuring intervening measures are taken to aid the student.
- Planning activities that aim to ease students' anxieties and make them feel prepared for their next stage of learning.

Section 3 – Support

Students with severe communication needs have a right to additional bilingual support. Parents of students with severe communication difficulties and for whom English is not their first language may also need bilingual support.

Where a student with EAL is assessed as having little to no English, support will be provided in the form of induction classes. These classes focus on practical, everyday English. During the induction period, typically lasting six weeks, but varying dependant on students' progress, students will still take part in PE, art and maths classes. In-class support and small group work is utilised as soon as the student can be successfully integrated into the classroom environment. The student will still spend time with their intervention teacher on a daily basis.

Support includes:



- PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System)
- AAC devices (such as iPads with *Speak for Yourself* or Proloquo2Go)
- LAMP (Language Acquisition through Motor Planning)
- Makaton and gesture-based communication
- Now and Next boards
- Visual timetables and object cues
- Choice boards and emotion check-ins
- Dual-language visuals for key routines and vocabulary

Students with little or no English are supported through functional communication first, building understanding of everyday words and phrases before academic language is introduced.

Bilingual support may be provided for families and students where appropriate.

Section 4 – Inclusion

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

- There is an understanding throughout the school, for both staff and students, that a limited knowledge of English does not reflect a lack of ability or knowledge. Appreciating a student's ability to speak their own first language is essential for building their confidence and self-esteem.
- The language development of students is the responsibility of the entire school community.
- Mainstream and support departments will work together to ensure optimal outcomes are achieved.
- Diversity will be valued, and classrooms will be socially inclusive.
- Teachers will be knowledgeable about students' abilities in English and use their knowledge to inform lesson planning and 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 students with EAL speak the same language, the school encourages wider integration to promote inclusion and to improve students' understanding of English.

Section 5 – Classroom practice

Teachers plan lessons with communication and language development at the centre of learning.



Classroom activities will be matched to students' needs and abilities with visual supports being utilised where possible.

Teachers will consider common misconceptions and language barriers, such as reading '3 x 3', where 'x' is read as the letter and not a function, and clarify meanings accordingly.

Where possible, the following practices will be utilised to improve students' literacy:

- Utilisation of the student's first language expertise.
- The provision of writing frames.
- The use of props.

Language skills will be developed through:

- Collaborative activities involving spoken communication.
- Feedback opportunities and conversations.
- Good models provided by peers.

Active participation will be encouraged by:

- Grouping students in mixed ability groups to develop language skills.
- 'Expert' readers and writers present in each group to provide assistance and model language.

Classroom displays will reflect cultural and linguistic diversity.

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

Bilingual dictionaries are available to aid students with EAL and dual language textbooks are available and used where possible.

Prior to any private tuition or one-to-one support, the student is informed of the purpose of the session and the objectives.

Section 6 – Initial assessment

- When students' first join the school, they will undertake a timely initial assessment to gauge pupils' English abilities in an informal manner that does not make the student feel isolated or inferior.
- The assessment will be carried out using the form provided in [Appendix 1](#).
- Initial assessments are carried out by the EAL lead, and completed assessments are held on the pupil's profile.

Section 7 – Access to the curriculum

The needs of students with EAL are considered by teachers when planning lessons. When planning lessons, teachers 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 students to use their first language in the classroom.
- The support requirements of students with EAL are identified and the support is made available.

Section 8 – Working with the parents

Liaison with parents is vital to the creation of a strong home and school partnership, which can ensure the development of students with EAL. To aid this partnership, the school 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 teachers read through the letter with students before sending the letter home, to ensure the message is clear.
- Where necessary, ensure translations of school documents are carried out and provided to parents of students with EAL.
- Encourage parents to attend parents' evenings and participate in school functions.
- Invite parents to school to help with class activities, such as cooking, reading and class outings, where appropriate.
- Encourage parents to become involved with homework through shared reading schemes and language-based homework.
- Plan activities in a way that ensures they do not clash with religious/community commitments.

Section 9 – Students working with SEND

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



A proportion of students with EAL may have one or more types of SEND and it is imperative that this is identified at an early stage. Assessments of SEN of students with EAL will involve EAL specialists along with SEND specialists.

Where appropriate, the school will arrange an assessment in the students' first language and SEND support will be decided on an individual basis in the manner outlined within the school's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy.

The school will ensure that the parents or carers of a student with SEND are not prevented from presenting their views throughout the process and are clearly informed at every stage.

Section 10 – Monitoring and review

The headteacher will review this policy on a three-yearly basis, considering feedback from practitioners on the effectiveness of the identified support for transition and in light of changes to the law or statutory guidance, and will make any changes necessary.



Revision Log

Date of first publication – September 2024

Revision number	Date of Revision	Nature of Revision
1.	12/11/2025	First Language Assessment Form update, transfer to new template.
2.		
3.		
4.		

First Language Assessment Form

Pupil's name: _____

Assessed by: _____

Date: _____

Languages spoken in the home: _____

Communication and Interaction Profile

(To be completed through observation, symbols, AAC, or discussion with parents/carers.)

Area	Prompt / Observation	Yes	No	Emerging / Partial	Evidence / Notes (include type of response: symbol, gesture, AAC, vocalisation, etc.)
1. Social & Linguistic Behaviour	Is the pupil's social or linguistic behaviour appropriate for their developmental stage (e.g. turn-taking, engagement, response to name, awareness of others)?	☐	☐	☐	
2. Understanding of First Language	Does the pupil respond to questions, instructions, or a familiar story told in their home language? (Responses may include looking, pointing, selecting symbol, gesture, or action.)	☐	☐	☐	
3. Speech or Expressive Communication	Is the pupil's speech clearly articulated, or do they use AAC/PECS/gesture effectively to express themselves?	☐	☐	☐	
4. Social Communication (English)	Can the pupil communicate socially (greet, request, comment) in English or using symbols representing English words?	☐	☐	☐	

5. Vocabulary Range	Is the pupil's vocabulary (spoken or symbol-based) appropriate, developing, or limited for their needs?	☐	☐	☐	
6. Grammar / Structure	Does the pupil combine two or more symbols/words appropriately (e.g. "want + drink", "go + home")?	☐	☐	☐	
7. Time Concepts	Can the pupil indicate past/present/future using visuals (e.g. now/next/finished/tomorrow cards)?	☐	☐	☐	
8. Concerns	Are there any concerns about the pupil's understanding or use of language in English or first language?	☐	☐	☐	
9. Social Interaction During Assessment	How does the pupil engage during assessment (eye contact, tolerance, turn-taking, interest, use of AAC)?	☐	☐	☐	
10. Literacy in First Language	Can the pupil recognise, match, or show interest in words or symbols from their home language (spoken, written, or pictorial)?	☐	☐	☐	
11. Numeracy / Problem Solving	Can the pupil complete simple counting, matching, or sorting tasks with limited verbal instruction (using objects or visuals)?	☐	☐	☐	

Additional Notes

Preferred communication method: (PECS, AAC device, gesture, vocalisation, Makaton, etc.)

Effective motivators or prompts used during assessment:



Sensory or behavioural factors affecting assessment:

Cultural or linguistic factors to consider (home routines, festivals, food, etc.):

Summary of Strengths and Next Steps

Area	Strengths	Next Steps / Targets
Communication		
Understanding		
Expression		
Literacy / Numeracy		
Social Interaction		

Evidence Collected

- ☐ PECS or symbol responses recorded
- ☐ Parent/carers discussion notes attached
- ☐ Observation sheet attached
- ☐ AAC screenshots / photo evidence
- ☐ Example work or visual record

Overall Summary

Summary statement: (Briefly describe how the pupil communicates in both English and their home language, noting preferred methods, level of understanding, and any functional use of symbols or speech.)

Assessor signature: -----

Date: -----