KING'S ELY

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Policy

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English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Policy

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English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Policy

Introduction

This Policy details the School's arrangements to recognise and meet the needs of pupils who do not speak English as their home or strongest language. That is, pupils who have home languages other than English and who are in the process of learning to use English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL) through immersion in the curriculum, taught ESOL lessons and the broader life of the School. This Policy is a Whole School Policy and applies to all pupils, including those in the EYFS.

For the purposes of this Policy, ESOL is used as the consistent term for pupils who use or are developing English as an additional language. The School recognises that multilingualism is an asset and that pupils learning English as an additional language must have equitable access to education, pastoral support, safeguarding information and the wider life of the School.

Regulatory framework

This Policy should be read alongside the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Additional Learning Needs and Special Educational Needs Policy, Admissions Policy, Curriculum Policy, Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Online Safety Policy (Appendix: Use of Personal Devices and Mobile Phones), Boarding Handbook & Boarding Principles and Practice and Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy. It supports the School's compliance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 from 1 September 2026, the Independent School Standards, including the Department for Education's April 2026 guidance for independent schools, the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers, where applicable, and relevant equality, data protection and safeguarding duties.

In implementing this Policy, the School will have regard to the Independent School Standards, including requirements relating to the quality of education, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, welfare, health and safety, safeguarding, leadership and management, and the provision of information to parents. Leaders will monitor the effectiveness of ESOL provision so that pupils can access the curriculum, make progress, participate in School life and be kept safe. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Staff must be alert to the fact that pupils who are developing English as an additional language may need additional support to understand safeguarding messages, express worries, report concerns or access help. Language barriers must never prevent a pupil from being heard or from receiving appropriate pastoral or safeguarding support. Any concern about a pupil's welfare, including concerns relating to attendance, mental health, online safety, child-on-child abuse, bullying, exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour, domestic abuse, radicalisation or neglect, must be reported in accordance with the School's safeguarding procedures.

Where information needs to be shared to safeguard or support a pupil, staff will follow the School's safeguarding, data protection and information-sharing procedures. The School will take

reasonable steps to ensure that pupils and parents can understand key information about safeguarding, pastoral support, attendance, behaviour expectations and reporting routes.

King's Ely aims:

- to be proactive in removing barriers that stand in the way of its ESOL pupils' learning and success;
- to meet the School's responsibilities to its ESOL pupils by ensuring equal access to the academic, co-curricular and pastoral life of the School;
- to provide ESOL pupils with a safe and welcoming environment where they are accepted, valued and encouraged to participate;
- to promote the value and assets of multilingualism and multiculturalism in the Whole School community.

Objectives

- School

- To improve the English language proficiency of ESOL learners appropriate to their age and stage;
- To ensure that all ESOL pupils participate in the life of the School and gain access to appropriately planned and prepared curricular provision;
- To ensure that ESOL pupils attain academic levels and examination grades appropriate to their abilities;
- To monitor the progress of ESOL pupils' acquisition of English, of their general achievement and of their attainment in examinations and assessments;
- To ensure that ESOL pupils are given opportunities for educational success that are equal to those of our English speaking pupils;
- To provide a range of teaching and learning activities to meet curriculum demands and different learning needs/styles;
- To ensure that ESOL provision supports safeguarding, wellbeing, attendance, behaviour, curriculum access and preparation for the next stage of education.

- Pupils

- To gain the knowledge and skills to use spoken English to communicate with others in a variety of curriculum and social contexts;
- To gain the knowledge and skills to use English to understand and produce written texts;
- To gain the skills and confidence to use a variety of strategies to enhance understanding and to express meaning clearly.

Admitting new pupils

- King's Ely Acremont and Fairstead House

Depending on the age of the pupils, an appropriate method of assessment will be used to judge the level of English support which would be required and to determine that progress in other core subjects is commensurate with the student's age. A decision will then be taken as to whether a place can be offered.

- King's Ely Prep and King's Ely Senior

As with all prospective pupils, entry is via interview, placement tests and references. ESOL pupils may, in addition, be given a test specifically designed to measure their English language skills, which includes the Password English test and a written assessed piece. Pupils will also have a face-to-face interview, either in person or online, with the Head of the relevant section of the School or in person at the School. Following assessments and interview, if appropriate, an offer is made.

An offer of a place may be conditional on agreement to specific ESOL support at extra cost.

Decisions regarding admissions and any recommended ESOL support will be made fairly and transparently, with regard to the pupil's individual needs, welfare, ability to access the curriculum and the School's responsibilities under equality and safeguarding duties. The School will not assume that limited English proficiency indicates special educational needs or disability; however, where there are indications that a pupil may also have SEND, the School will consider appropriate assessment, support and liaison with parents in line with the SEND Policy.

Teaching and Learning

The courses on offer at King's Ely focus specifically on the linguistic needs of pupils by:

- ensuring students' command and control of grammar and language structure is adequate to access mainstream lessons;
- developing the four academic skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening, with particular reference to completing academic tasks;
- focussing on developing both the active and receptive range of subject-specific vocabulary with an understanding of the social register (both formal and informal);
- explicit teaching of the conventions and differences of spoken and written English;
- providing a wide range of reading and listening materials that highlight the different ways in which English is used, particular with reference to understanding specific details for academic study;
- ensuring that in all lessons there are effective opportunities for using English in speaking activities, and that speaking is used to support writing;

- where appropriate, encouraging pupils to transfer their knowledge, skills and understanding from their home language;
- supporting language development through formative assessment, focussing on grammatical accuracy, vocabulary range, language complexity and writing genres such as emails, reports, article and reviews;
- helping students to improve their pronunciation through modelling, drilling and explicit focus on individual words and intonation;
- at all times promoting effective classroom note-taking and presentation skills, revision strategies and exam techniques;
- ensuring that pupils understand key safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and online safety messages and know how to seek help if they are worried about themselves or another pupil.

ESOL pupils are fully integrated members of the School community with full and equal access to all co-curricular activities including but not limited to:

- all School sports, games and clubs including those running at lunchtime, after School and at weekends;
- all arts, music and academic enrichment opportunities;
- the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme;
- the Language Leader Award programme;
- School debating teams;
- Model United Nations programme.

Assessment of English Progress

When learning in an English-medium environment, ESOL pupils' English skills will inevitably develop at different rates and to different levels. Some ESOL pupils, once immersed in an English-medium environment, will make significant progress quite quickly and this often reflects learning habits such as reading, listening to and speaking English outside the classroom. Other pupils will need more sustained support to achieve the levels of English necessary to access the curriculum and become fully integrated into the School community.

It is therefore necessary to sustain a programme of ESOL assessment, so that the School can advise parents with confidence on the language development of ESOL pupils, with particular focus on whether a pupil has developed, or is likely to develop, the language skills necessary to access the academic curriculum.

Assessment information will be used to inform teaching, target-setting and support, and to identify whether a pupil's needs relate primarily to language acquisition or whether further assessment may be required for possible SEND, wellbeing or safeguarding reasons. Progress and concerns will be shared with relevant staff in accordance with the School's information-sharing procedures.

Social Integration

It is recognised that language plays a major role in an ESOL pupil's ability to participate fully in the spiritual, moral, social and cultural life of the School beyond the classroom. The two key areas which are focused on to aid ESOL pupils in this respect are awareness and confidence. Pupils need to be continually encouraged to speak in English as much as possible outside the classroom, but encouragement is also vital in terms of their participation in subject-based discussions. ESOL pupils are encouraged to take part in the rich and varied programme of co-curricular opportunities in all sections of King's Ely, including international week where they can teach and share their culture.

ESOL pupils in the boarding environment

ESOL pupils form a valued part of the School's boarding community. Throughout their respective Houses they are encouraged to speak English by Housemasters and Housemistresses, Duty Tutors and Matrons, especially in communal areas such as common rooms and kitchens. Regular meetings are held between the boarding HsMs and the Director of Boarding to highlight how pupils are coping and integrating in House. Feedback is circulated to respective tutors and teachers where issues have come to light. ESOL pupils take part in House activities and weekend excursions for boarders; many are regular participants in weekend sporting fixtures too. Wherever possible the school attempts to fully integrate ESOL pupils into the school community. Within boarding houses, boarding staff and tutors would encourage, but not insist, that pupils think about sharing a dormitory with a different language speaker.

Boarding staff, tutors and Heads of Year, will support ESOL pupils through appropriate induction into School and House routines, pastoral and academic monitoring, communication with parents or guardians where relevant, and encouragement to access House routines, activities, and sources of support. Staff should be attentive to pupils who may be adjusting to life in the UK, living away from family, experiencing loneliness or cultural transition, or finding it difficult to communicate concerns. Any welfare or safeguarding concern identified in the boarding environment must be shared promptly in line with the School's safeguarding procedures.

Staff Awareness and Attitude

It is vital that subject teachers remain aware of the specific language needs of ESOL pupils within their lessons and subject areas. The guiding principle is that pupils learning English as an additional language bring valuable linguistic, cultural and academic strengths. ESOL status must not be treated as a special educational need in itself, although some pupils may also have SEND and should be supported through the appropriate School procedures where this is identified. These pupils are accessing curricula in a different country and in an additional language, and the level of achievement and skill involved in this should never be underestimated. Understanding, praise,

high expectations and appropriate support are vital components in helping ESOL pupils succeed in any subject area. Staff should contact the ESOL department, relevant pastoral staff, the SENDCo or the Designated Safeguarding Lead as appropriate if they have concerns about a pupil's access to learning, welfare, attendance, behaviour or safety. The sooner an issue is raised, the earlier support can be offered. Masterclasses and staff guidance are provided to support staff who are new to the teaching of ESOL pupils.

Encouraging Participation

Teachers should consider carefully ESOL pupils' seating positions in class. Encouraging them to sit near the front will improve clarity of hearing. Depending on cultural background and personality type, ESOL pupils may be self-conscious or less comfortable about contributing verbally in discussions. Again, encouraging them to sit at the front will mean that they will not be speaking across pupils for whom English is their home or strongest language. Any ridiculing of an ESOL pupil's verbal contribution should be dealt with swiftly in line with the School's anti-bullying procedures. Allowing ESOL pupils more thinking time, valuing written contributions, offering praise and building on their contributions will all help develop confidence in participating in class discussion or offering verbal answers. The School's focus on oracy as an important life skill for all pupils also supports these intentions.

Creating a language focus within the classroom will also assist ESOL pupils. Dedicating a section of a display board to *key topic vocabulary for the lesson* or ending each teaching session with a quick vocabulary quiz for all pupils will also benefit them; pupils for whom English is their home or strongest language are likely to appreciate the technique too.

Staff must also ensure that classroom practice promotes mutual respect, prevents bullying or discriminatory behaviour, and supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Any incident involving prejudice, bullying, harassment, child-on-child abuse or a safeguarding concern must be addressed in line with the relevant School policy and reported through the appropriate route.

Pre-teaching and Resources

ESOL pupils in King's Ely Senior will benefit from being given preparation material prior to lessons. This will not only be of practical use but will also help to engender confidence and participation during lessons. Giving ESOL pupils the opportunity to pre-read lesson text is also desirable as they will often read at a slower pace during lesson time than pupils for whom English is their home or strongest language and may need to consult a dictionary at times.

In King's Ely Senior, whenever possible, teachers should provide ESOL pupils with photocopies of text and notes so that pupils can annotate their copies to aid understanding. The language used in teaching materials should not be simplified, but difficult vocabulary should be accompanied by

a definition in parenthesis and pupils encouraged to write it up in their vocabulary or memory books.

In King's Ely Prep, staff liaise with the ESOL staff regarding useful vocabulary that will support ESOL pupils in their lessons.

During the Lesson

There are several considerations in terms of teaching technique within lessons which need to be focused on when ESOL pupils are present. Firstly, any written information on interactive boards, OneNote or whiteboards needs to be very clear and easy to read. One of the key focus areas for all teaching at King's Ely is clarity and communication. All pupils, particularly ESOL learners, will benefit from:

- clear written aims and learning objectives on the board and presentation;
- linking the lesson to the coursebook/scheme of work/exam;
- appropriate quantity of written text on slides and presentations;
- use of visuals, diagrams and infographics to support explanation;
- checking understanding via think-pair-share, think time and mini-white board work;
- awareness of pace of spoken delivery, use of voice and volume;
- avoidance of idiomatic, colloquial or overly informal English;
- sensitivity to cultural, religious and political issues relevant to pupils' backgrounds.
- With particularly difficult vocabulary, pronunciation should be repeated, a definition given (preferably written on board) and the word should be contextualised.

Essay writing is an area in which ESOL pupils may need support and guidance. They will benefit greatly from Cloze Procedure exercises with model essays. At the beginning of courses, teachers may find it necessary to provide ESOL pupils with essay structure templates which provide topic sentences for paragraphs. Analysing and modelling successful written work also greatly supports pupils. In King's Ely Prep, pupils are supported with their essay writing in their ESOL lessons using a variety of methods including templates, model answers and specific teaching of academic style and vocabulary.

ESOL pupils may at times discuss work with peers in their home language. Recent research has clarified that this may be encouraged judiciously by the subject teacher as a resource to check comprehension, plan ideas and rehearse content. As long as the objective of the lesson, stage or activity is delivered in English, learning may be aided through the home language.

Where digital platforms, online resources or translation tools are used to support learning, staff should do so in accordance with the School's Online Safety, Acceptable Use, Data Protection and Safeguarding Policies and Procedures. Pupils should be reminded that online safety expectations apply equally in School, boarding and home contexts.

Assessment/Target setting

In King's Ely Senior, pupils are expected to complete the tasks set in mainstream lessons to the same level as their year group, with appropriate support where needed. Some subjects, such as History, Geography are harder due to the density of vocabulary. Here, support is given with prep, if needed, to ensure the pupil keeps up with the level of the class. Specific science support lessons are also provided to those studying full time ESOL.Targets are set and reviewed after each exam. The difficulty of tasks will increase as the pupil moves through the year and through their course. English as a First Language classes are a case apart, and some time will always be given in ESOL lessons in year 11 to help the pupil plan and structure responses to writing and, if needed, to discuss the set text and ensure a thorough understanding of the book.

In King's Ely Prep, ESOL pupils join at any point from Year 3 to Year 8. Their needs and language skills vary hugely. Assessment of their language acquisition, in terms of spoken English and written English, is regularly undertaken and progress is shared with parents. Targets and number of ESOL lessons are adjusted accordingly.

Student Responsibility

ESOL pupils have chosen to attend a School in an English-medium country, which operates in a language that is not their home language. As a result of this choice, they must be aware of the potential challenges and demands that they will face in accessing a curriculum in English. It is therefore expected that every ESOL pupil at King's Ely will engage in additional work and preparation as required if they are to reach their potential. The onus is very much on the pupil to improve their language skills by reading and speaking English as much as possible outside the classroom, and to put in the additional effort required to make sure that they are prepared for lessons and consolidate what they have learned. This will be supported by staff in general and the ESOL Department in particular, through implementation of the approaches detailed in this document. However, the key message is that language difficulties are not an excuse for lack of effort and staff need to impress this fact upon pupils whenever necessary.

An ESOL pupil with the right attitude and level of application will have every chance to succeed at King's Ely; indeed, the School has had ESOL pupils in the past who have attained the prestigious honour of being appointed King's or Queen's Scholars – a tremendous achievement in itself, and particularly impressive when the pupil has been learning in an additional language environment.

APPENDIX ONE - Early Years Foundation Stage

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, King's Ely follows the current EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers. The School provides opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in play and learning, supports language development at home, and ensures that children have sufficient opportunities to learn and reach a good standard of English. Staff will also have regard to EYFS safeguarding and welfare requirements, including communication with parents, child absence monitoring, online and screen-use considerations, safer recruitment, safer sleep where relevant, food and drink, health and safety, and procedures for concerns about children's safety or welfare.

Children who speak English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL) are entitled to equal access to the whole curriculum and to assessment procedures. Children learning through ESOL may be more vulnerable to poor outcomes at the end of the Foundation Stage and beyond if their language needs are not identified and supported appropriately.

The School must ensure that all children with ESOL needs have supported access to the curriculum, that bilingualism and multilingualism are recognised as assets and a learning opportunity, and that communication with parents is effective. Children with ESOL must not be labelled as having Special Educational Needs because they are developing English as an additional language. Where there are wider concerns about a child's development, learning, communication, wellbeing or safety, staff will follow the appropriate EYFS, SEND and safeguarding procedures. When assessing a child with ESOL, their developing English must not inhibit the understanding of their ability in other areas.

Entering the EYFS:

During the Pre-Nursery visits, staff must:

- record the child's language background and home language skills through Parent Information Sheets;
- check spelling and pronunciation of the child's name;
- record cultural and religious information at admission, including customs, diet, festivals, worship. Explain that King's Ely has a Christian ethos but welcomes staff and children from many different ethnic groups;
- reassure parents that continued use of the home language at home will support their child's developing use of English and broaden their potential for learning.

Wherever possible, the School works with bilingual staff and students to:

- provide positive role models,
- raise self-esteem,
- provide religious/cultural advice,
- support understanding, concept development and assessment,

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