WHITE HOUSE SCHOOL

English as an Additional Language (EAL) Policy

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CAVENDISH EDUCATION

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1. Context

The White House School is an independent specialist school for children and young people with additional and complex needs. We are part of Cavendish Education and are committed to transforming lives through highly personalised education, therapeutic support and ambitious teaching.

Our vision is **"Making Learning Possible Again."** We create a school where pupils feel safe, belong, achieve and thrive. Through removing barriers to learning, rebuilding confidence and fostering positive relationships, we empower every pupil to realise their potential and prepare for successful and fulfilling lives beyond school.

Our mission is to provide a nurturing, ambitious and mindful education that supports both academic progress and personal growth. Guided by our whole-school ethos of **Healthy Minds, Happy Hearts**, we create the conditions for every pupil to become **Ready to Learn and Prepared for Life**.

Everything we do is underpinned by our core values:

- **Ambition** – developing curiosity, courage and aspiration.
- **Resilience** – developing confidence, character and perseverance.
- **Community** – demonstrating kindness, integrity and respect.

We believe that pupils thrive when they feel safe, understood and valued. Our culture is built upon strong relationships, high expectations and a commitment to seeing the strengths and potential in every child. We are deeply nurturing without lowering expectations and remain unashamedly ambitious for every pupil.

Our practice is informed by the National Autistic Society's **SPELL Framework**, which promotes:

- Structure and predictability;
- Positive approaches and expectations;
- Empathy and understanding;
- Low arousal environments;
- Strong links between school, home and professionals.

Alongside this, we adopt a trauma-informed, relational and therapeutic approach across all aspects of school life. We recognise that behaviour is a form of communication and believe that pupils do well when they can. Our role is to understand the barriers they face and provide the support, strategies and relationships that enable them to succeed.

At The White House School:

- Every interaction is viewed as an intervention.
- Every adult is an emotionally available adult.
- Relationships come first.
- Emotional readiness is the foundation for learning.

We support pupils to develop emotional regulation, communication, independence and social understanding through consistent relational practice, personalised support and integrated therapeutic approaches. Emotional regulation is explicitly taught through co-regulation, sensory support, movement opportunities and personalised regulation strategies. Pupils are encouraged to understand themselves, develop resilience and build the skills needed to navigate life successfully.

Safeguarding is at the heart of everything we do. We recognise the additional vulnerabilities that many pupils with special educational needs may experience and maintain a culture of vigilance, care and advocacy. We place the child at the centre of decision-making, listen to pupil voice in all its forms and work closely with families and external agencies to promote safety, wellbeing and positive outcomes.

Through ambitious and adapted teaching, meaningful relationships, therapeutic support and a culture of belonging, we help pupils feel safe, build confidence, achieve success and thrive both in school and beyond.

2. Aims

This policy aims to:

- To ensure that all pupils who have English as an Additional Language (EAL) are able to access the full curriculum and achieve their potential.
- To promote rapid and sustained language development in English, while valuing and respecting pupils' home languages and cultural identities.
- To remove barriers to learning and participation by providing appropriate support, scaffolding, and differentiation.
- To foster an inclusive environment where linguistic and cultural diversity is celebrated as a strength of the school community.
- To enable pupils with EAL to develop confidence, independence, and full participation in school life.
- To provide staff with the knowledge, strategies, and resources needed to meet the needs of EAL learners effectively.
- To engage parents and carers as active partners in supporting their child's language development and educational progress.
- To monitor, track, and evaluate the progress of EAL pupils to ensure that gaps are identified and closed swiftly.

3. Legislation and Guidance

This policy has been written with an understanding of the relevant legislation and guidance; this includes but is not limited to:

- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2019
- Equality Act 2010
- National Curriculum in England
- Department for Education (ad hoc) guidance on English proficiency of Pupils with EAL

4. Definitions

In this policy, the term 'English as an Additional Language' (EAL) refers to pupils whose main language at home is a language other than English. EAL encompasses all levels of bilingualism and any child learning and using English as an additional language.

5. Implementation

We understand that pupils may start at the school with differing levels of bilingualism and fluency in English. Partnership with parents is vitally important to a child's progress and we promote how valuable it is to continue speaking their first language.

Pupils with EAL will face various difficulties throughout their academic life. Pupils' aptitude for English will vary, but many will face barriers to learning, accessing the curriculum and reaching their full potential. Pupils 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. This policy has been established to ensure all pupils with EAL at the school are given the best possible chance to reach their full potential.

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. The school does not have a catchment or profile that leads to higher-than-average levels of pupils with EAL needs, but the school is mindful and proactive of being ready and prepared to meet this need when required. We promote equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory

practices; differences are celebrated, and any resulting needs are addressed (see Admissions and Equal Opportunities Policies).

Our school EAL focused objectives are to:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for newly arrived pupils with EAL.
- Assess the skills and needs of pupils with EAL.
- Gather accurate information regarding children's backgrounds, cultures and abilities.
- Equip teachers and support staff with the necessary skills, resources and knowledge to support pupils with EAL.
- Use all available resources to raise the attainment of pupils with EAL.
- Systematically monitor pupils' progress, and adapt policies and procedures accordingly.
- Ensure all children's languages, cultures and identities are represented in classrooms and throughout the school.
- Maximise opportunities to model the fluent use of English.
- Ensure pupils with EAL are acknowledged for their skills in their own languages.

To support the above aims, staff members adhere to the following procedures:

- Gather and share information about the child's background (including the language/s the child speaks, religion, cultural customs and traditions and any dietary requirements).
- Let the parents know that we welcome and celebrate different languages and cultures.
- Establish consistent, simple, daily routines, checking that the child understands what to do and if necessary repeating explanations and directions on a one-to-one basis, adding visual prompts where needed.
- Use lots of visual support, gestures, pictures and objects to aid understanding and language development.
- Acknowledge children's attempts to communicate; children will often switch between languages and will often understand more than they can verbalise.
- Ensure that all staff model appropriate, correct language and grammar, using lots of repetition and positive interactions.
- Identify opportunities to teach and embed targeted vocabulary and key language structures and use these to plan for activities/interactions in the child's individual and class planning.
- Plan for the consistent inclusion of children with EAL in small group activities which enable frequent meaningful episodes of interaction with peers, in activities which promote communication.

- Ensure an awareness that children with EAL often go through a 'silent period' or 'quiet period' before they are confident to speak English, or they may not want to use their home language for a variety of reasons.
- Providing a running commentary/talking through actions will model the use of language.
- Where a child with EAL speaks a home language which is also spoken by a member of staff, enable a good liaison between the two to provide support and manage linguistic challenges.
- Build on and interpret non-verbal responses as effective turns in conversation and provide an English translation.
- One-word and short phrase responses are paraphrased and extended to longer sentences.

We recognise that the English language skills of a child with EAL will also develop as a result of their interactions with their friends and classmates. Staff aim to cultivate this opportunity in, for example, providing new children with EAL with a mentor or buddy and, where practical, linking a new child with EAL with a classmate prior to starting, with a view to organising holiday playdates.

On entry to the school, we gather information via our initial parent forms. This helps to inform us about the pupil's abilities in their home language/s and how best to support them.

Ongoing monitoring and support are set in place as needed on an individual basis, incorporating, where needed, the support of the parents.

6. Access to the Curriculum

The needs of pupils 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 pupils to use their first language in the classroom.
- The support requirements of pupils with EAL are identified and the support is made available.
- Staff training will be delivered annually to support delivery of the curriculum to EAL pupils.

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

Teacher planning will include details of differentiation for EAL. This can take many forms including:

- Access to dual language texts, posters and displays
- Access to word banks and bilingual dictionaries
- Opportunity for visual literacy techniques such as reading pictures and drama
- Provide opportunity for higher order thinking
- Opportunity for discussion and cooperative learning
- Opportunities to communicate in their first/home language with teachers and learning support assistants
- Display artefacts and materials which reflect the children's home background
- Encourage children to write their own dual texts, when appropriate
- Participate in Black History Month, Refugee Week and Traveller History Month
- Plan learning opportunities in lessons which reflect minority ethnic backgrounds.

All staff members have a responsibility to ensure the development of pupils 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 pupils with EAL in their classrooms.
- Identifying pupils with EAL who are experiencing difficulties and ensuring intervening measures are taken to aid the pupil.
- Classroom displays will reflect cultural and linguistic diversity.

7. Assessment

Assessment is undertaken as a partnership between the class teacher, Literacy Lead, SLT, teaching assistants, parents/guardians and pupil. Termly assessment of level of language acquisition will be carried out to ensure that challenging bespoke targets to accelerate progress are in place. Interventions are personalised, time limited and are monitored to ensure accelerated progress. In assessment of EAL children,

competence in English is categorised on a five-point scale using the Department for Education's EAL classification codes:

A: New to English	May use first language for learning and other purposes. May remain completely silent in the classroom. May be copying/repeating some words or phrases. May understand some everyday expressions in English but may have minimal or no literacy in English. Needs a considerable amount of EAL support.
B: Early acquisition	May follow day-to-day social communication in English and participate in learning activities with support. Beginning to use spoken English for social purposes. May understand simple instructions and can follow narrative/accounts with visual support. May have developed some skills in reading and writing. May have become familiar with some subject specific vocabulary. Still needs a significant amount of EAL support to access the curriculum.
C: Developing competence	May participate in learning activities with increasing independence. Able to express self orally in English, but structural inaccuracies are still apparent. Literacy will require ongoing support, particularly for understanding text and writing. May be able to follow abstract concepts and more complex written English. Requires ongoing EAL support to access the curriculum fully.
D: Competent	Oral English will be developing well, enabling successful engagement in activities across the curriculum. Can read and understand a wide variety of texts. Written English may lack complexity and contain occasional evidence of errors in structure. Needs some support to access subtle nuances of meaning, to refine English usage, and to develop abstract vocabulary. Needs some/occasional EAL support to access complex curriculum material and tasks.
E: Fluent	Can operate across the curriculum to a level of competence equivalent to that of a pupil who uses English as his/her first language. Operates without EAL support across the curriculum.
N: Not Yet Assessed	This code is available for use where the school has not yet had time to assess proficiency.

8. 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 pupils 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 children 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 pupils 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.

9. Monitoring Progress

The monitoring of pupils' progress is shared between all teachers. Individual pupil profiles are updated following assessments and reviewed on a termly basis to identify and address problems. Pupils are also encouraged to set their own targets and objectives to bolster self-esteem and increase accountability.

10. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy and information report will be reviewed by the headteacher every three years. It will also be updated if any changes to the information are made during the year. It will be approved by an executive director prior to publication.

11. Links with other Policies

This policy links to the following documents:

- Admissions Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Assessment Policy
- SEND and Inclusion Policy
- Equality, Inclusion & Diversity Policy

Approval & Policy Review

This Policy has been reviewed and approved by:

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