IWYS

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROVISION

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EAL) POLICY

Document Control

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Contents

1. Policy statement and purpose

2. Scope and definition

3. Principles and intended outcomes

4. Legal and guidance framework

5. Identification, induction and learner profile

6. Assessment and monitoring of English proficiency

7. Teaching, learning and curriculum access

8. Individual support planning and review

9. EAL and SEND

10. Newly arrived learners and interrupted education

11. Communication with parents and carers

12. Safeguarding, wellbeing and equality

13. Use of interpreters and translation

14. Roles and responsibilities

15. Staff development and resources

16. Monitoring, evaluation and policy review

Appendix A. EAL learner profile checklist

Appendix B. Practical classroom strategies

Appendix C. Staff quick-reference procedure

Appendix D. Approval

1. Policy statement and purpose

IWYS Alternative Education Provision is committed to ensuring that every learner who uses English as an Additional Language (EAL) is welcomed, valued and supported to participate fully in education. A learner's use of one or more languages other than English is an asset. It must never be treated as a deficit, a lack of ability or a reason to lower expectations.

This policy sets out how IWYS identifies language-learning needs, assesses English proficiency, plans appropriate support and removes barriers to learning. It recognises that learners may be bilingual or multilingual, may have very different levels of English, and may have varied experiences of previous education.

The policy is tailored to an alternative provision context, where learners may join at different points in the academic year, have disrupted educational histories, attend for a limited timetable or have additional social, emotional, health, safeguarding or SEND needs.

2. Scope and definition

This policy applies to all learners attending IWYS, whether on a full-time or part-time placement, short-term placement, vocational programme, tuition arrangement or other commissioned provision. It applies to all staff and adults working on behalf of IWYS.

EAL describes a learner whose exposure to or use of a language other than English is part of their linguistic background. The term is a broad descriptor and does not indicate a learner's level of English, intelligence, literacy, academic ability, length of residence in the UK or need for additional support.

A learner may be born in the UK and use EAL; may be fluent in spoken English but still developing academic language; or may be at an early stage of learning English. Learners may use several languages and dialects. IWYS will avoid assumptions based on name, appearance, nationality, ethnicity or accent.

3. Principles and intended outcomes

- High expectations: EAL learners are entitled to ambitious, appropriately challenging teaching and meaningful qualifications and destinations.
- Language and learning together: English language development is supported across the curriculum, not left solely to an English lesson or individual support worker.
- Strengths-based practice: home languages, cultural knowledge, prior learning and multilingual skills are recognised as resources.
- Individualised support: decisions are based on each learner's assessed needs, experience, voice and progress.
- Belonging and participation: learners are supported to build positive relationships, contribute and feel safe.
- Fair assessment: language proficiency is considered when interpreting curriculum assessments, without confusing English fluency with subject knowledge.
- Partnership: IWYS works with learners, families, placing schools, local authorities and relevant specialists where appropriate.

4. Legal and guidance framework

IWYS will have regard to the current legal and guidance framework relevant to its status, registration and commissioning arrangements. This includes, where applicable:

- Equality Act 2010, including protection from discrimination and the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people where applicable.
- Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years, including careful assessment where EAL and possible SEND overlap.
- Education Act 1996 and applicable duties concerning suitable education and access to education.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and current local safeguarding partnership procedures.
- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 when collecting, recording, storing and sharing personal and language-background information.
- Department for Education school census guidance and the current definitions and descriptors used for recording first language and English proficiency, where relevant to the commissioning school or data return.
- Current specialist guidance and resources from The Bell Foundation and relevant local authority Ethnic Minority Achievement / EAL services.

The precise statutory duties applying to IWYS depend on its legal status and the arrangements for each placement. This policy does not assume that every school-specific statutory requirement applies identically to an independent or alternative provision setting. The Head of Provision must check applicability and ensure contractual and commissioning requirements are met.

5. Identification, induction and learner profile

EAL needs should be identified as early as practicable, preferably during referral, admission or initial assessment. A learner must not be delayed from accessing education solely because a full language assessment or translated paperwork is not yet available.

With appropriate consent or other lawful basis, IWYS will seek relevant information from the learner, parent/carer and placing school. Information may include:

- Languages used by the learner, with whom and in which settings; preferred language for communication; and the learner's own view of their language strengths.
- Age of first exposure to English and other languages, length and pattern of English-language learning, and confidence using English in different situations.

- Previous education, schools attended, curriculum studied, qualifications, gaps or interruptions in education and literacy in any language.
- Strengths, interests, aspirations, existing knowledge, skills and any relevant work samples or reports.
- Communication preferences, accessibility needs, known support strategies and any relevant speech, language or communication information.
- Any relevant safeguarding, wellbeing, health, SEND or attendance information, shared proportionately and securely.

Staff should distinguish information that is confirmed from information that is reported or not yet known. A learner should not be asked to disclose sensitive migration, asylum or family history unless it is necessary, appropriate and handled by a suitably trained person.

6. Assessment and monitoring of English proficiency

Assessment should build a rounded picture of the learner's English development and curriculum knowledge. It should be proportionate to the length and purpose of the placement and should inform teaching rather than label or limit the learner.

6.1 Four language modes

Where appropriate, staff should gather evidence across listening, speaking, reading and writing. A learner may show different levels of confidence across these modes and across social, vocational and academic contexts. Conversational fluency alone does not demonstrate readiness to manage the language demands of all subjects.

6.2 Assessment approach

- Use a recognised EAL-specific framework where practicable, such as The Bell Foundation's EAL Assessment Framework, to inform professional judgement and next-step targets.
- Use observation, discussion, reading and writing samples, curriculum tasks, learner voice and information from previous settings.
- Consider the learner's prior education and literacy in their home language, where this information is available and useful.
- Record the date, context, evidence and support or adaptations used. Do not present an adapted task as a standardised assessment.
- Revisit assessment at appropriate intervals and after significant changes in provision. Avoid unnecessary repeated testing.

The Bell Foundation framework provides descriptors and assessment tools across listening, speaking, reading and writing and can support target-setting and tracking over time. It is a resource to support professional judgement, not a diagnostic test.

6.3 Recording and interpretation

Where a commissioning school requires a proficiency judgement or school census information, IWYS will provide accurate evidence within its role and agreed arrangements. The commissioning school remains responsible for its own statutory data returns. Staff must not infer proficiency from nationality, first language, length of residence or a single test score.

7. Teaching, learning and curriculum access

All staff share responsibility for developing language and making subject content accessible. Support should normally be integrated into meaningful curriculum learning. EAL learners should not routinely be withdrawn from valuable subject teaching, practical learning, peer interaction or qualification opportunities.

7.1 Effective classroom practice

- Establish a welcoming environment and learn to pronounce the learner's name correctly.

- Use clear, concise instructions; explain key vocabulary; check understanding discreetly and invite learners to demonstrate or explain what they have understood.
- Pre-teach and revisit essential subject vocabulary, including technical and abstract terms.
- Model spoken and written language, provide worked examples, sentence starters, writing frames, word banks and visual prompts.
- Break complex tasks into manageable steps and provide thinking and processing time.
- Use diagrams, images, demonstrations, objects, dual-language glossaries, subtitles and accessible digital tools where helpful.
- Structure paired and group talk so that learners have purposeful opportunities to listen, rehearse and use new language.
- Provide reading support, explicit teaching of subject-specific reading strategies and opportunities to develop extended writing.
- Allow learners to use their strongest language strategically for planning, discussion, glossaries or demonstrating prior knowledge, where feasible.
- Maintain age-appropriate content and cognitive challenge; scaffold access rather than automatically simplifying the learning objective.

7.2 Curriculum and qualifications

EAL learners should have access to the full curriculum and relevant vocational, enrichment and careers opportunities. Staff should identify the language demands of tasks and qualifications and teach the vocabulary, structures and communication skills required. Access arrangements in examinations are governed by the relevant awarding body rules; EAL status alone does not automatically confer an entitlement to extra time, a reader, a scribe or other arrangements.

8. Individual support planning and review

Where a learner requires planned additional EAL support, the designated EAL lead or nominated tutor will coordinate an EAL support record or incorporate the information into the learner's individual learning plan.

Plan element	What should be recorded
Starting point	Relevant language profile, prior education, strengths and curriculum starting points
Priority needs	Specific barriers to communication, literacy or access to curriculum tasks
Targets	Small, observable language and curriculum targets, linked to listening, speaking, reading and/or writing
Strategies	Teaching approaches, resources, staff responsibilities and any specialist advice
Learner and family voice	Learner preferences, aspirations and relevant parent/carer contributions
Review	Evidence of progress, what has helped, next steps and review date

Targets should be specific and meaningful, for example: use and explain five key terms in a vocational topic; follow a sequence of three spoken instructions with visual support; identify the main point and evidence in a short text; or write a structured paragraph using appropriate connectives.

Support should be reviewed at appropriate intervals and when the learner's needs, placement or attendance pattern changes. The review should consider language development, curriculum progress, participation, confidence and whether the support remains appropriate.

9. EAL and SEND

EAL is not a special educational need or disability. A learner must not be identified as having SEND solely because they are learning English or are not yet fluent in English. Equally, EAL must not be used to explain away a possible underlying SEND.

Where concerns arise, staff should consider evidence from different contexts and, where possible, the learner's strongest language. They should explore prior development and learning, progress over time, attendance, quality and duration of EAL support, hearing or vision, communication, health, emotional wellbeing and any relevant history. The learner and family should be involved in an accessible way.

The designated EAL lead and SENDCo (or person carrying out the SENDCo function) should work together. Where appropriate, IWYS will seek advice from the placing school, local authority specialist service, educational psychologist, speech and language therapist or other relevant professional. EAL and SEND support may be required at the same time.

10. Newly arrived learners and interrupted education

Some learners may have arrived recently in the UK or may have experienced disrupted schooling, trauma, family separation, bereavement or periods without formal education. Staff must not assume that all newly arrived learners share the same experiences or needs.

- Provide a planned induction, explain routines and expectations using accessible language and visual support.
- Establish what the learner already knows and can do; do not assume low subject ability because English is developing.
- Consider literacy and numeracy in any language, previous curriculum experience and gaps in formal education.
- Provide predictable routines, a named trusted adult and opportunities to build relationships at a manageable pace.
- Be alert to wellbeing and safeguarding concerns and follow the safeguarding policy; do not probe for traumatic experiences unnecessarily.
- Agree a realistic initial timetable and review it with the placing school and family where appropriate.

11. Communication with parents and carers

IWYS will seek to communicate respectfully and effectively with parents and carers. Staff should identify preferred language and communication method and consider translated key information, interpretation, visual information, plain English, additional time or alternative meeting arrangements.

Important information about safeguarding, attendance, progress, reviews, consent and significant decisions should be communicated in a way the recipient can reasonably understand. Translation technology may assist with routine communication but should not replace a competent interpreter for complex, sensitive or high-stakes discussions.

12. Safeguarding, wellbeing and equality

All safeguarding procedures apply equally to EAL learners. Language barriers may make it harder for a learner to understand safety information, disclose a concern or explain what has happened. Staff must take reasonable steps to communicate effectively and must not mistake limited English for lack of understanding, agreement or credibility.

- Provide safeguarding information in an accessible form and check understanding without leading the learner.
- Use a suitably qualified or competent interpreter for a disclosure or sensitive safeguarding discussion where needed; do not use another child as an interpreter.
- Do not promise secrecy. Record the learner's words as accurately as possible and report concerns immediately to the DSL.
- Do not allow language barriers to delay urgent protective action or referral.
- Challenge racist, xenophobic, faith-based or language-related bullying, harassment and discriminatory behaviour in accordance with IWYS policies.
- Do not treat language, accent, nationality, ethnicity, religion, migration status or use of a home language as indicators of safeguarding risk.
- Consider the effects of isolation, exclusion, culture shock or barriers to participation and respond supportively.

13. Use of interpreters and translation

- Use an appropriately skilled interpreter for sensitive, formal or complex conversations where accurate communication is important.
- Check the interpreter's role, confidentiality expectations and suitability; explain the purpose of the meeting and use short, clear statements.
- Speak directly to the learner or parent/carer, not to the interpreter, and allow additional time.
- Do not use children, siblings or other learners to interpret safeguarding disclosures, confidential information or significant decisions.
- Check translated documents for accuracy and suitability before issuing them, especially where safety, consent, legal rights or formal decisions are involved.
- Record when interpretation or translation was used and any limitations that affected the discussion.

14. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Proprietor / Senior Leadership	Ensure policy oversight, suitable resources, staff awareness and review of provision and outcomes.
Head of Provision	Ensure EAL needs are identified, provision is coordinated, staff know their responsibilities and relevant commissioners are informed appropriately.
Designated EAL lead / nominated tutor	Coordinate learner profiles, assessment, targets, resources, advice and reviews; support colleagues and monitor EAL provision.
All teachers and tutors	Plan language-aware lessons, assess understanding, maintain appropriate records, challenge discrimination and raise concerns.
SENDCo / SEND lead	Work with EAL lead to distinguish language acquisition from possible SEND and coordinate combined support where required.
DSL / safeguarding team	Ensure safeguarding information is accessible, concerns are acted on and appropriate interpretation is arranged.
Administration / data staff	Handle information securely, follow retention and sharing procedures and support accessible communication.
Learners and families	Where appropriate, contribute views, identify strengths and preferences and participate in support and review.

15. Staff development and resources

IWYS will provide proportionate guidance and professional development, so staff understand EAL, multilingualism, second-language development, inclusive teaching, assessment and the relationship between EAL and SEND. Induction for new staff should include this policy and relevant safeguarding procedures.

Resources may include bilingual and dual-language texts, dictionaries, visual aids, vocabulary banks, accessible digital tools, translated key information and advice from specialist local services. Digital translation tools must be used with care, particularly where personal or sensitive data is involved.

16. Monitoring, evaluation and policy review

The Head of Provision and designated EAL lead will monitor the effectiveness of this policy through appropriate review of:

- Whether EAL learners are identified promptly and receive a suitable induction and language profile.
- Quality and frequency of language assessment and review of targets.
- Access to teaching, qualifications, vocational learning, enrichment and careers education.
- Progress in English language development alongside curriculum learning and individual outcomes.
- Attendance, participation, learner voice, wellbeing and reported experiences of discrimination or bullying.
- Feedback from learners, parents/carers, staff and placing schools.
- Whether staff training, resources and specialist advice are sufficient.

The policy will be reviewed annually, and sooner if relevant legislation, statutory guidance, specialist advice or IWYS practice changes. The next scheduled review is November 2027.

Appendix A. EAL learner profile checklist

Area	Information to consider / record
Languages	Languages and dialects used; preferred language; contexts and communication partners
English development	Listening, speaking, reading and writing; social and academic language
Home-language skills	Oracy and literacy where known; learner's confidence and strengths
Education history	Previous schools, curriculum, qualifications, gaps and interruptions
Strengths and interests	Subjects, practical skills, hobbies, aspirations and prior knowledge
Access needs	Visual support, processing time, assistive technology, communication preferences
Family communication	Preferred language, method, interpreter or translation requirements
Support and review	Targets, strategies, responsible staff, evidence and review date

Appendix B. Practical classroom strategies

Potential barrier	Helpful approaches
Unfamiliar vocabulary	Pre-teach key words; display visuals; revisit terms; use examples and non-examples.
Complex spoken instructions	Use short steps, demonstrate, provide written/visual prompts and ask the learner to show the first step.
Reading subject texts	Pre-teach vocabulary; chunk text; use glossaries; model how to identify key information.
Extended writing	Use model answers, sentence starters, paragraph frames and opportunities to rehearse ideas orally.
Limited confidence speaking	Use paired rehearsal, structured talk, supportive questioning and adequate wait time.
Demonstrating subject knowledge	Allow diagrams, practical demonstrations, labelled images or strategic home-language planning where appropriate.
Family communication	Use plain English, translated key information and competent interpretation when required.

Appendix C. Staff quick-reference procedure

IDENTIFY → WELCOME → ASSESS → PLAN → TEACH → REVIEW

1. Identify possible EAL needs during referral, induction or everyday teaching. Do not make assumptions from appearance or nationality.
2. Welcome the learner and establish preferred language and communication methods.
3. Gather relevant background information and assess listening, speaking, reading and writing where appropriate.
4. Agree practical targets and teaching strategies with the learner and relevant staff.
5. Embed language development in everyday teaching while maintaining ambition and curriculum access.
6. Review progress and raise any concerns about SEND, wellbeing, discrimination or safeguarding through the appropriate procedure.

Appendix D. Approval

Approval detail	Entry
Policy	English as an Additional Language (EAL) Policy
Organisation	IWYS Alternative Education Provision
Approved by	_____
Position	_____
Signature	_____
Date	_____
Next review	November 2027

Key reference resources

- The Bell Foundation – EAL Assessment Framework — https://www.bell-foundation.org.uk/resources/eal-assessment-framework/
- Department for Education – English proficiency: pupils with EAL — https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-proficiency-pupils-with-english-as-an-additional-language
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years — https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 — https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2
- Hampshire EMTAS – assessment and EAL position statements — https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/emtas