

**Policy for English as a Second Language**

This document applies to the whole College, inclusive of boarding. It is publicly available on the College website and, upon request, a copy (which can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required) may be obtained from the College Office.

**Scope:** All who work, volunteer or supply services to the College share responsibility for understanding and implementing this policy both within and outside normal College hours, including activities away from the College site. All new employees and volunteers are required to confirm that they have read, understood and will abide by this policy and its associated procedures by signing the Policies Register.

**Legal Status:** This policy complies with The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations currently in force and is informed by:

- The Equality Act 2010
- Current JCQ examination regulations
- Safeguarding and child protection guidance

**Monitoring and Review:** The implementation and effectiveness of this policy are subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Principal. A full annual review will be undertaken and formally documented in writing. Any identified weaknesses or areas for improvement will be addressed without delay. Staff will be informed of updates electronically or in writing.

Reviewed: February 2026  
Next Review: February 2027

Signed

David Game  
CEO and Founder

John Dalton  
Principal

This policy is a statement of our College's aims and strategies to ensure that ESL students fulfil their potential.

**Introduction**

This policy sets out the College's aims and strategies to ensure that students who have English as a Second Language (ESL), also referred to as English as an Additional Language (EAL), are fully supported to achieve their academic potential and participate confidently in College life.

All students need to feel safe, accepted and valued in order to learn. For students who are learning English as an additional language, this includes recognising and valuing their home language, prior learning experiences, cultural background and identity. The College recognises that bilingualism and multilingualism are significant strengths and that students who speak more than one language bring important intellectual and cultural contributions to the College community.

We take a whole-College approach towards language awareness, inclusion and equal opportunity, ensuring that curriculum planning, pastoral support and teaching strategies reflect the needs of ESL learners.

In a College where a significant proportion of students are from overseas and where many are boarders, the College recognises that dedicated attention to English as a Second Language (ESL) provision is essential to ensure full access to education, safeguarding and community life. The College acknowledges that students studying in a second language must navigate academic, social and cultural expectations simultaneously, often while living away from their families. Accordingly, the College is committed to providing structured and sustained language support to enable overseas students to access the

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full curriculum, understand College policies and expectations, communicate effectively, integrate confidently within the boarding environment, and participate fully in College life. Robust ESL provision forms part of the College's wider commitment to equality of opportunity, student welfare and academic excellence.

### **College Context**

At David Game College:

- Students come from a wide range of linguistic and cultural backgrounds
- Over twenty languages are spoken within the College
- Some students arrive with a strong foundation in English, often having attended institutions such as Kensington Academy of English
- Other students are new to both the English language and British educational culture
- Some students may have experienced trauma or displacement, including those from conflict-affected regions
- Some ESL learners may be isolated linguistically, being the only speaker of their home language within their class or year group

The College gathers detailed information on:

- linguistic background and competence in other languages
- previous educational history
- family and biographical background
- pastoral or safeguarding considerations

A designated ESL Lead (currently Maria Samsonova / Catherine Cowen) oversees provision. The Principal retains overall responsibility for compliance and implementation.

### **Understanding the Challenges of GCSE and A-Level Study**

Students who have English as a second language face specific challenges when studying GCSE and A-level courses due to the complex linguistic demands of these qualifications.

The academic language used in examination papers is advanced, precise and subject-specific. ESL students may experience difficulty with:

- complex vocabulary
- sophisticated grammatical structures
- abstract reasoning expressed through language
- interpreting nuanced exam questions
- articulating knowledge clearly in extended written responses

In addition, cultural references, idiomatic expressions and contextual assumptions embedded within subjects such as English Literature or History may present further barriers to full comprehension.

Many ESL students require additional time to process information in English, particularly in fast-paced academic environments. The pressure of performing academically in a non-native language may increase anxiety and affect confidence.

However, with appropriate and structured support — including targeted language instruction, differentiated teaching strategies, subject-specific ESL provision and, where appropriate, examination arrangements — students are able to overcome these challenges and succeed academically.

## Identification and Initial Assessment

Effective ESL provision depends on accurate and early identification of language proficiency.

Upon entry to the College:

- Students' English proficiency is assessed through formal testing
- Prior attainment data (including ALIS or YELLIS where appropriate) is reviewed
- Diagnostic writing and speaking assessments may be undertaken
- Discussion with the student provides additional insight into language experience

The triangulation of information between subject teachers, the ESL Lead and Heads of Year ensures that appropriate support is provided throughout the academic year.

## Key Principles of Additional Language Acquisition

- Access to learning requires explicit attention to vocabulary, subject terminology and academic language structures
- Language is central to identity; home languages must be recognised and valued
- Conversational fluency may develop quickly, but academic language proficiency may require sustained support over several years
- Language develops most effectively in purposeful contexts across the curriculum
- Teaching staff model academic language and support structured language development
- Skills developed in a first language aid acquisition of additional languages
- ESL is distinct from Special Educational Needs; language acquisition alone does not constitute SEN

Where concerns arise regarding progress, careful consideration is given to stage of acquisition, length of exposure to English-medium education and prior educational experience before any referral under SEN procedures.

## Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

- Targets for ESL students are appropriate, ambitious and regularly reviewed
- Curriculum planning incorporates both subject objectives and language development objectives
- Staff regularly observe, assess and record developing language use
- Linguistic, cultural and religious backgrounds are considered in curriculum design
- Assessment methods are reviewed for cultural bias
- Regular liaison meetings ensure collaborative monitoring

## Teaching and Learning Provision for ESL Students

The College recognises that effective ESL provision is essential to ensure that students who are learning English as an additional language are able to access the full curriculum and achieve their academic potential. ESL provision is embedded within mainstream teaching and is not confined solely to discrete language lessons. All teaching staff share responsibility for supporting the development of academic English within their subject areas.

The College ensures that:

- The language demands of each subject are identified and addressed within planning
- Academic and subject-specific vocabulary, including examination command words, is explicitly taught and reinforced through regular retrieval practice
- Key terminology is introduced in context and supported through glossaries, vocabulary lists and structured repetition
- Complex tasks are structured and scaffolded in order to support comprehension and independent learning
- Writing frames, sentence starters and model responses are provided where appropriate to support extended written work
- Reading materials are introduced with pre-teaching of vocabulary and contextual background to support comprehension
- Guided annotation strategies are used to develop reading fluency and analytical skills
- Teaching incorporates visual, practical and contextual support, including diagrams, timelines, graphic organisers, demonstrations and worked examples
- Instructions are delivered clearly and, where necessary, broken into manageable steps
- Opportunities for structured speaking and listening are provided to develop fluency, pronunciation and academic confidence
- Structured academic discussion is facilitated through paired and small-group work with clearly defined roles
- High-quality academic language is modelled consistently in both oral and written forms
- Teachers provide exemplars of high-standard answers and explicitly demonstrate how to construct analytical paragraphs and examination responses
- Differentiation maintains high academic expectations while adapting linguistic complexity where appropriate
- Time is provided for processing information and formulating responses
- Collaborative learning activities are used to promote purposeful academic discussion and peer modelling of language
- Formative assessment is used to monitor both subject understanding and language development, with feedback addressing clarity, structure and vocabulary use
- Students' first languages are recognised as valuable assets and may be used strategically to support conceptual understanding, planning or clarification where appropriate
- Teaching practices are culturally responsive and promote inclusion and respect for diversity
- Digital tools, including structured language platforms and pronunciation software, may be used to reinforce language acquisition
- Artificial intelligence tools are used responsibly and in accordance with College policies on academic integrity and e-safety, and do not replace independent student work unless explicitly authorised

The College maintains high expectations for all ESL students and ensures that language support enhances, rather than narrows, access to the full curriculum. Teaching strategies are regularly reviewed to ensure that provision remains responsive to student need and aligned with regulatory requirements.

### **Examination Access Arrangements**

Where appropriate, ESL students may be considered for examination access arrangements in accordance with JCQ regulations.

Any arrangements:

- reflect the student's normal way of working
- are supported by appropriate evidence
- are processed through the Exams Officer in consultation with the ESL Lead and, where relevant, the SENCo
- comply fully with awarding body regulations

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Possible arrangements may include bilingual dictionaries (where permitted), additional time where criteria are met, or other approved support measures.

### **Boarding Provision**

For boarders, language acquisition continues beyond classroom teaching.

Boarding provision supports:

- supervised prep and structured academic study
- conversational English practice in social contexts
- social integration within the boarding community
- monitoring of wellbeing and adjustment

Boarding staff liaise with academic and pastoral teams to ensure consistency of support.

### **Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

Artificial Intelligence offers a range of tools to enhance ESL teaching and learning, including:

- adaptive learning platforms
- AI-powered language practice applications
- automated formative assessment tools
- grammar and writing enhancement software
- pronunciation analysis tools
- translation support tools
- gamified interactive learning
- virtual tutoring systems

AI tools can personalise learning experiences, provide instant feedback and support independent practice.

Students are expected to use AI responsibly and in accordance with College policies on academic integrity and e-safety. AI supplements, but does not replace, independent student learning unless explicitly authorised.

### **Parental and Community Engagement**

The College encourages parental and community involvement through:

- welcoming induction processes
- use of plain English and interpreters where available
- recognition of linguistic, cultural and religious backgrounds
- celebration of student achievements
- encouragement of continued first-language development at home

## **Resources**

The College provides:

- appropriate textbooks and dictionaries
- vocabulary lists
- ICT resources
- visual learning aids
- subject-specific language materials

## **Special Educational Needs and High Attainment**

- Most ESL students requiring support do not have SEN
- Where SEN is identified, equal access to provision is ensured
- ESL students identified as high attaining have equal access to extension and enrichment opportunities

## **Review**

This policy will be reviewed by John Dalton in February 2027