

CHRIST'S HOSPITAL

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE POLICY

Christ's Hospital is proud to welcome students of all nationalities and is committed to supporting their academic and pastoral development, enabling them to thrive in every aspect of boarding school life.

While many students are able to meet the academic demands of studying in English without additional support, we recognise that some may benefit from targeted language assistance. In such cases, English tuition is provided at no extra cost by the English as an Additional Language (EAL) department.

Aims of the department

The EAL department at Christ's Hospital is committed to supporting students for whom English is an additional language. Its aims are to:

- Identify students with EAL needs as early as possible to ensure timely and appropriate support.
- Develop students' linguistic confidence and competence through small-group lessons, enabling them to become independent learners and reach their academic potential.
- Celebrate the cultural, linguistic, and educational diversity that EAL students bring to the school community.
- Collaborate with staff across departments to raise awareness of EAL strategies and support consistent, inclusive teaching practices throughout the curriculum. Monitor the language acquisition and academic progress of students receiving EAL support.
- Prepare students for the Cambridge IGCSE in English as a Second Language and/or English as a First Language, as appropriate.
- Support sixth form students in preparing for the IELTS examination.

Admissions and assessment process

At Christ's Hospital, students are identified as having English as an Additional Language (EAL) if their first language is not English, regardless of their current level of fluency. This diverse group includes students who may be conversationally proficient but still require support with academic English.

All applicants for whom English is not their first language are required to sit an in-house EAL written entrance test, marked by the Head of EAL. This is followed by an interview conducted either in person during a school visit or remotely by a member of the Senior Leadership Team. The entrance test is aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). To ensure students can access the curriculum, albeit with reasonable adjustments and classroom support, the following minimum proficiency levels are generally expected:

- O2-LE: CEFR B1
- UF-GE: CEFR B2/IELTS 6

- DG–GR: CEFR C1/IELTS 6-7

For sixth form entry, it is preferred that applicants have one of the following:

- GCSE or IGCSE English as a First Language grade 4
- IGCSE English as a Second Language grade 5
- IELTS 6
- Cambridge First pass

On occasion, the school may require applicants to follow language courses by a school-approved provider as a condition of their acceptance.

Christ's Hospital reserves the right to not admit students whose needs it cannot meet after reasonable adjustments have been considered. The Head's decision will be final in all cases.

Upon entry

As part of the induction process, each EAL student's language proficiency is confirmed through the Cambridge English Placement Test (CEPT). This is a computer-adaptive assessment aligned with the CEFR.

Combined with the results of the entrance assessment, the CEPT provides a comprehensive picture of the student's language needs. This information enables the school to make informed decisions about the student's curriculum. Where required, adjustments are made to the student's timetable to include EAL lessons.

In addition, subject teachers may refer students who are not currently receiving EAL support but who appear to be experiencing language-related difficulties. Referrals should be made via email to the Head of EAL.

EAL curriculum

Where initial assessment indicates a need for additional language support, students are offered EAL lessons, typically delivered in small groups. Christ's Hospital recognises that transitioning from conversational English to academic English presents significant challenges. EAL lessons are therefore designed to:

- i) Develop the four core language skills: listening, reading, writing and speaking.
- ii) Expand students' lexical and grammatical range and accuracy to support academic work.
- iii) Prepare students for the IELTS examination in the sixth form.
- iv) Prepare students for IGCSE English as a Second Language (ESL) and/or IGCSE English as a First Language, depending on their level.

Third Form to Greater Erasmus

For those students who have been identified as requiring EAL support, classes are run within the regular school timetable. Students can expect to receive up to five periods of EAL lessons per week.

In Third Form and Little Erasmus, lessons focus on developing the four language skills, improving range and accuracy, and include one period dedicated to reading literature to build vocabulary and comprehension.

In Upper Fourth, all EAL students receiving support prepare for the Cambridge IGCSE English as a Second Language (ESL). Students who are ready, based on teacher assessment and in consultation with the Head of EAL, are entered for the exam in June of UF.

In Greater Erasmus, students who have successfully completed IGCSE ESL progress to IGCSE English as a First Language, taught in small groups by an experienced EAL teacher. Students not yet ready for IGCSE ESL in UF continue their preparation in GE and are entered for the exam in June.

Sixth form

In the sixth form, students typically attend weekly IELTS preparation sessions over the course of three terms, culminating in the IELTS examination during the Michaelmas term of their Grecians year.

Students may also be identified as requiring additional language support through either the school's entry and induction assessments or referrals from subject teachers. In such cases, students will receive EAL support in place of a fourth A Level or the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ). These lessons are timetabled within the regular school day and are tailored to meet the specific academic and linguistic needs of each student.

EAL and Special Education Needs (SEN)

If concerns arise regarding a student's progress that extend beyond language acquisition, a referral is made to the Learning Support Department. The Head of EAL and the Head of Learning Support work collaboratively to determine whether the underlying need is primarily language-related or indicative of a broader learning difficulty that would be evident in the student's first language.

This collaborative approach enables students to receive the most appropriate support, whether through continued EAL provision, SEN intervention, or a combination of both.

Assessment and Monitoring

Progress in language acquisition is assessed regularly through in-class activities, including grammar and vocabulary quizzes, receptive skills tasks (listening and reading) and structured

writing exercises. Writing is typically assessed during lesson time to ensure authenticity and to minimise reliance on translation tools or AI.

The EAL department designs its assessments and examinations in line with the school's broader academic policy, ensuring consistency and rigour across subjects.

Teaching staff guidance

The EAL department works closely with academic departments to effectively support EAL students across the curriculum. Key strategies include:

- **EAL Register and Learning Passports:** teachers are provided with up-to-date information and practical strategies via the EAL Register and individual Learning Passports.
- **Professional Development:** EAL provision is a regular focus of the school's micro-CPD programme, equipping staff with strategies to support language learners in mainstream lessons.
- **Guidance on supporting EAL students** is available to all staff via Teams.

At an individual level, the EAL department liaises directly with teachers when concerns arise about a student's language needs. The Head of EAL may observe specific lessons to assess whether additional support is required in particular subjects.

In some cases, EAL students may be encouraged to use their first language as a cognitive support tool, particularly when the complexity of a task would otherwise hinder learning. This is at the discretion of the classroom teacher. Outside of these instances, students are expected to use English in all lessons.

Pastoral support and welfare

Christ's Hospital celebrates the rich cultural diversity of its student body and recognises that adapting to life in a busy boarding school can be both exciting and challenging. To support students transitioning to life and study in the UK, the school provides a robust pastoral framework to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils. Teachers play a key role in this provision, working with house parents, Heads of Year, tutors and the International Student Lead, providing students with consistent support both in and beyond the classroom. Beyond this, Christ's Hospital further supports international students by the following means:

- **Induction Programme:** New international students attend a two-day induction before Michaelmas term. This helps them settle into boarding life, collect uniform, set up IT, review timetables, and explore the campus. Each student is paired with a current pupil for peer support. During induction, students complete a compulsory EAL assessment overseen by the Head of EAL.
- **International Student Lead (ISL):** A designated staff member provides pastoral, wellbeing, academic and immigration guidance. The ISL acts as a liaison between students, families and the school, and coordinates cultural activities and practical support (e.g., healthcare, banking).

- **Leave Weekend Programme:** International students who remain on site during scheduled breaks are offered a welcoming environment and cultural trips, overseen by the ISL and supported by the Head of EAL and a Chinese-speaking language assistant. This ensures continuity of care and integration.
- **Collaboration with EAL Department:** The EAL team works closely with the ISL and boarding staff to monitor welfare and language needs. Both departments maintain an open-door policy, ensuring students feel supported academically and pastorally.

Author: KCUR

Date of last review: December 2025

Date of next review: December 2027