



EAL/ Academic English Policy

Primary person responsible for updates to this policy: Head of EAL Department
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Last review date: June 2026

Next review date: June 2027

Circulation: This policy has been adopted by the governors and is available to parents on request. It is addressed to all members of staff and volunteers and applies wherever they are working with children.

‘Parents’ refers to parents, guardians, and carers.

Introduction

Academic English forms the educational foundation for any international student studying with us, whatever course they follow, as English is the language for both teaching and learning.

Every student's language target is to achieve a minimum of 6.5 in the IELTS exam (International English Language Testing System), with a minimum of 6.0 in each component. It is compulsory to study this course until this is achieved, although we recommend students study beyond this score. There are various courses to follow to do this, depending on the English level at the start (which we will assess upon arrival). Students who achieved IELTS 6.5 prior to joining DLD need to produce a valid certificate to evidence this.

The IELTS exam is as important as any GCSE or A level subject, Foundation course or BTEC qualification, and must be taken alongside these, because the demonstration of Academic English skills of a certain level (generally 6.5) is a prerequisite for entry to all good universities. Further to this, universities such as Oxford, Cambridge, LSE, Imperial and UCL often request 7.0/7.5.

This exam focuses not only on the four main language skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening), but also on the academic learning skills required on their academic journey, into university and beyond, for example, discursive essay writing, argument analysis and note-taking.

Aims and Objectives

- To develop students' understanding of a wide variety of complex reading texts, recognising implicit meaning.
- To enable students to understand standard spoken language on both unfamiliar and familiar topics normally encountered in personal, social, academic, or vocational contexts.
- To equip students with the skills to write clear, well-structured essays, using an appropriate style, highlighting relevant issues, expanding, and supporting points of view with arguments where relevant and showing controlled use of connectives and cohesive devices.

- To support students in interpreting data presented in diagrammatic form, identifying and reporting on the main features, using the correct lexis.
- To facilitate students' ability to express themselves fluently and articulately in a range of speaking contexts.
- To build the competencies necessary for higher education in English-speaking environments.
- To prepare students to understand how language operates in different cultural contexts, enabling effective communication.
- To promote students' personal development and social integration.

The development of English language proficiency is integral to the personal development of EAL learners. As students acquire and refine their English skills, they gain the ability to communicate effectively, access the curriculum, and participate fully in school life. This progression supports the growth of confidence, independence, and self-esteem.

Developing competence in English enables EAL students to express their thoughts, ideas, and emotions more clearly, fostering positive relationships with peers and staff and promoting a sense of belonging within the school community. It also supports the development of critical thinking, problem-solving, and academic skills essential for successful learning across all subjects.

How students will progress

At interview, the College will establish which main course a student should study for and place him/her at the correct point in this progression table for the Academic English component:

2 Year GCSE students will study and prepare for:

PET Preliminary English Test

APC (Academic Preparation Course) and 1 Year GCSE students will study and prepare for:

IELTS exam

Years 12 to 14 will study and prepare for:

IELTS exam

These exams are now all computer-based and externally assessed, with an even 'mark weight' balance across the four main skills areas.