Policy document control box	
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Policy contents:	

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1. Purpose

Red Balloon of the Air (RBAir) is committed supporting our learners to make progress, academically, personally and socially. This policy supports that overarching aim by making it clear the extent to which we are able to offer suitable support to English as an Additional Language (EAL) learners

In line with general RBAir aims, our intentions are that students:

- are able to engage fully in the educational and wellbeing programme on offer;
- are well prepared for life beyond Red Balloon of the Air;
- make informed decisions for themselves.

2. Scope

This EAL policy forms the basis for practice across RBAir and is intended to delineate to what extent our model of online teaching and learning allows us to offer support to online EAL learners.

RBAir aims to ensure that all EAL pupils admitted to an RBAir programme are able:

- to use English confidently and competently.
- to use English as a means of learning across the curriculum
- to be fully included in the RBAir community
- to be supported to reach their full potential

3. Student admissions – all learners

To ensure that a student is able to access the curriculum online, there are minimum requirements and expectations of English competency for all learners, including EAL learners.

Students with English as an additional language (EAL) will have a wide variety of needs, and will have strengths and weaknesses in different skills. On admission there will be an initial meeting with the parents and an interpreter may be sought if necessary. This meeting is important in gaining understanding of the student's starting point and context, and to get to know them as an individual. Information to clarify would include:

- Personality, for example, whether they are normally shy or outspoken
- Proficiency in their native language, and whether they have any issues with articulation or fluency
- Educational background, including whether they have attended school before and whether they may have an existing special educational need or disability (SEND)

- Experience of language at home, including how proficient the student's parents are in English

This will enable the identification of the skills the student needs to develop in order to effectively access the curriculum. These identified needs will also be informed by the demands of the curriculum. Due to the online nature of RBAir provision there is the explicit demand for students to use primarily reading and written text chat as the initial form of online communication or using sound without visual cues (we do not use video calls – see our Safeguarding policy). Students will need a functional level of reading and writing skills in English to be able to access the provision appropriately.

This may preclude some EAL learners, but it is important that EAL learners are able to access an educational provision that is able to support their English language development in an in-person environment.

All learners after admission sit a LUCID Exact diagnostic test in their English sessions. This is a screening tool that is primarily used to assess for exam access arrangements but is also used to help to identify areas of strength and weakness in reading comprehension, speed, fluency and spelling in which the student would benefit from additional help and support, as well as identify suitable student groupings.

4.   SEND support

RBAir may admit bilingual or other EAL students if they have reached an appropriate standard of English competency and can confidently access online learning delivered in the English language.

We understand that some learners may have a basic level of English competency with a reading age of 10+ years but may still require additional support in order to develop their language skills. In this case, reasonable adjustments will be made so that the learner is helped to access their full chosen curriculum.

An EAL learner will initially be supported through individual assessment by the SEND department, which may lead to appropriate interventions by specialist colleagues and/or the English teaching team. RBAIr has a qualified Level 7 assessor in the SEND team who is qualified to complete in person psychometric testing using the appropriate assessment tool which can give further insight into the specific learning needs of a student.

Additionally in this context all teachers are teachers of EAL and will be supported by the SENDCo to adapt their teaching by using an accessible English lexis and simplified phrasing, making vocabulary acquisition (general and subject-specific) an explicit and

context-based activity during learning sessions, and modelling clear English communication.

There are many additional tools teachers can use, such as word banks, writing frames, using visual cues and supports, and in most cases these will be used by teachers to support the language and knowledge development of a range of students, not just those with EAL.

However, the SEND department can offer bespoke advice to assist teachers in their sessions with each EAL learner.

5.   Related legislation and documents

Legislation and guidance that inform this document

- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice
- The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
- Part 6 of the Equalities Act 2010

Other Red Balloon policies to be read in conjunction with this one

- Child Protection and Safeguarding

- Admissions

- SEND

- Diversity, Equality and Inclusion