



Whilst most students attend Rochester Independent College as day students from the local and regional area, we also welcome applications from overseas students whose first language is not English. The College's policy to accept individual applications on their own merits facilitates the cultural and racial diversity that is embedded within the College.

Where possible we ask overseas students to visit the College for interview, as this is an effective way of assessing the prospective student's oral skills and listening comprehension. However, if a student cannot visit, the College Principal will consider the student's last school report, examination grades and a reference from the head teacher or head of year. It is helpful if prospective students can show their level of English language competence through a recognised English language examination, such as the Cambridge suite or IELTS. Those students who would be applying for a Student visa (known formerly as a General Student visa) would have to show their language competence by taking an exam through one of the exam providers as prescribed by UK Visas and Immigration.

If an overseas student attends the College as a Year 7-11 day student they would follow the mainstream curriculum but customised to their particular need according to future ambition and level of language competency (so, for example, they may or may not follow GCSE English Literature and/or GCSE English Language). They also receive English language support that focusses on grammar and tenses, as well as the skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking.

Those following an A level programme would have at least four hours English language support per week in addition to their academic subjects. They would sit an initial assessment test to ascertain their language level on a general basis. In the first year they would follow a Foundation IELTS programme, practising reading, writing, listening and speaking within the context of familiarising themselves with the IELTS tasks. The second year involves consolidating what was learned in the first year, with regular test practice. Students' progress is monitored through homework and tests, and is included on their academic report. Students take the IELTS exam at various points in the second year of A level, and also sometimes in the first year of their course for practice.

It can take some time for students to become attuned to the language and used to their new environment. If a student is having particular difficulty it is possible to arrange one-to-one lessons in order to strengthen their language skills or help them with subject vocabulary. Boarding staff help the overseas students to adjust culturally and integrate within the College community, especially when a student is new and may be feeling homesick.

There are also resident tutors who, when on duty, can offer help and guidance with language work and oral skills. Strong emphasis is placed on students practising all English skills as much as possible outside lessons, as this is the key to their academic success. Newspapers and books are available in the common rooms and they are encouraged to become members of the local library. Personal tutors see their students regularly not only to check academic progress, but also to make sure that they are happy and looked after, as well as deal with any issues that may arise.

