



From mountain to sea

English as an Additional Language

Guidelines: Accessing Interpreting and Translation Services

Updated August 2022



1 Interpreting and Translation Service Guidance for Schools

1.1 Context

These guidelines are to ensure that Aberdeenshire Council is complying with all relevant legislation with regard to providing adequate language and communication support. A summary of the relevant legislation and relevant reports states that:

'Failure to provide language and communication support where there is a known need is:

- *indirect discrimination*
- *institutional racism (if an organisation cannot deliver a proper service to all) (Working with Interpreters, Scottish Refugee Council).*

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to inform staff of interpreting and translation services that are available for people who speak languages other than English, and how these services can be used most effectively.

Schools can access interpreting and translation services through the English as an Additional Language (EAL) Service. **There is no cost to the school when requesting the service through EAL as it holds the central budget for all Education interpreting and translation services requests.**

Therefore, requests for interpreting and translation services **are to be made to, and will be processed by the EAL Service** to allow coordination of payment and remove some of the workload from school office staff.

Additionally, the EAL Service offers advice on the best form of translation/interpreting for a specific context to avoid duplication of resources that have already been translated. The EAL Service also gives advice where schools have little experience of working with interpreters. It will also give continuity if providers change.

1.3 Procedure

The following procedure applies when requesting Interpreting and Translation Services:

1.3.1 Translation of documents:

Please complete the [request for interpreting form](#), delete the 'face-to-face interpreting section and send to eal.service@aberdeenshire.gov.uk. The translation will then be sent back to you once received.

1.3.2 Face to face translation:

Please complete the [request for interpreting form](#), delete the 'translation of document' section and send to eal.service@aberdeenshire.gov.uk Please keep a copy of the timesheet from the interpreter and confirm (by email) completion of job and start and finish time.

1.3.3 Telephone interpreting:

For an emergency call or a planned call which should be booked.

Preparation:

- Ensure you know the correct language and dialect.
- When booking a call:
 - confirm the parent's availability – in the first instance you can send a translated letter (available from the EAL Service) to check availability for a call at a given date and time. If there is not a response you may need the interpreter to call the parent first to make sure they are free at a specific time and would have access to their phone.
 - The appointment must be booked at least 3 days in advance.
 - Follow the steps in column B on the next page:

Using a telephone interpreter

***You must use an account that can dial to outside telephone numbers, usually an admin or management staff account.

Emergency – You need to make the call now

A. Only for emergencies

1. **Call 01463 592116**
2. **Give requested information** including the Telephone Interpreting PO Number for this year.

(An updated PO number to cover the current financial year will be sent by the EAL Service each year. You do not need to raise one in school)

3. **Please note down:**
 - Call **start time**
 - Call **finish time**
 - Interpreting **job number** (Please ask for this if it is not given)
4. Please **press Ctrl and Click on this [Link](#)** to send details of the call to the EAL Service so we can process payment.

Book a call for a future date and time

B. (For parent meetings etc.)

1. Press **Ctrl and Click on this [Link](#)** and **send** with completed details of your request.
2. The EAL Service will get back to you to confirm the details of the booking.

On the day

3. **Call 01463 592116** a few minutes early.
4. **Explain** you have booked the call through Aberdeenshire EAL Service and give the booking details. The reference number for the job will be in the following format DDMMXXX (the date followed by the job number for the day). You will then be put through to the interpreter.
5. Please **note the start and end time** of the call.
6. Please **press Ctrl and Click on this [Link](#)** to send details of the call to the EAL Service so we can process payment.

Advice

- Make the call in a quiet space with sufficient time to conclude the call.
- Have all information written down in advance of phone call.
- Ensure you cover all points before concluding the conversation.
- Ask the other person to confirm their understanding by summarising the conversation.

2 What's the best way to use the different available options?

If a parent/carer has requested information in a different language:

Urgent? Where you need to communicate with the parent/carer urgently please use a telephone interpreter to call the parent/carer or use speakerphone with the parent/carer present with you. Please follow the above guidance on accessing a telephone interpreter.

Meeting with parents: If an interpreter is required at any time e.g. future meetings with parent/carer, please follow the guidance at the beginning of this document.

Confirming attendance: When contacting parents/carers to confirm attendance it is always best to confirm through a telephone interpreter when you are able to have a two-way discussion and respond to any questions. There may also be occasions when you can confirm face-to-face e.g. taking advantage of meeting with an interpreter by setting the date for next meeting. Translated notes are also available that can be sent home to offer parents a range of options to choose from and then respond to indicate when they can attend.

NOTE:

- School bilingual staff and EAL team bilingual staff should not be asked to interpret in formal meetings (e.g. child/young person's planning meetings) or to translate lengthy or formal school communications.
- It is not appropriate to use other pupils or family members for anything other than basic day-to-day communication. In particular, pupils and family members should not be used to communicate sensitive information or to interpret during meetings, e.g. child/young person's planning meeting

Text and written communication:

Plain English All school communications should be written in plain English so that they are fully accessible to as many parents/carers as possible without the need for additional support: <http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/files/howto.pdf>

School Reports: The EAL Service advise against the translation of school reports to be sent home as some concepts and vocabulary may be unfamiliar to the family. It is more helpful to offer the parent/carer a meeting with an interpreter where the interpreter can support the parent/carer in understanding the report. This enables the parent/carer to ask questions.

For any publications: The Council Language Statement should be included in all publications to allow equality of accessibility. Please see more information on the Language Statement in Appendix A.

Newsletters/other routine information: should be in English with any key information highlighted. The Council Language Statement should be included in all publications to allow equality of accessibility. Please see more information on the Language Statement in Appendix A.

Previous reports: Schools should request translations of first language reports from the previous school, medical reports, psychological reports etc. Please follow the guidance at the beginning of this document on requesting a translation.

Resources/Home school comments: The EAL Service can share/signpost a range of generic translated materials to support learning and home-school communication. Primary School menus are available in some languages on the council [website](#).

Automated translation: Local Authority guidance is that Google Translate and other automated translation software/applications **should not be used**. While it is recommended to include the first language in supporting learners, both curricular support and home-school communication, automated translation software is prone to errors, particularly with sentences beyond single word level. Even single words can be prone to errors e.g. synonyms.

Groupcall: is only appropriate for routine communication as it is also prone to errors (see above). **Please also see specific advice on the use of Groupcall Messenger in Appendix B.** We would advise the use of telephone interpreting services in emergencies; interpreters for parent meetings; translation of important documents such as Educational Psychologist reports, Sensory Support Service reports etc. A set of commonly sent messages is already available from the EAL Service in the most commonly requested languages. These have been translated through the council's contracted supplier and will be accurate.

Translations: Any other communication that is likely to be reused should be translated through the 'translation of text' procedure outlined above. Where the message is unique to the child and unlikely to be reusable, it is good practice to speak with the parent/carer through a telephone interpreter so that the parent/carer can confirm understanding and ask any questions that they may have. Written translations can also be requested where it is felt to be the most appropriate means of communication.

3 Working with interpreters

3.1 *Interpreter or translator?*

An interpreter conveys the meaning of speech or sign language so that two or more people can understand each other as if they share the same first language. It is not expected that an interpreted sentence will be of the same length as the original one, as each language differs in terms of its grammatical structure and vocabulary. The purpose of interpreting is to convey a meaning and as long as an interpreter is not requested to do the verbatim interpreting, that is what will be delivered. A translator translates written text from one language into another.

3.2 *Interpreting:*

3.2.1 **Planning is important:**

- Allow sufficient time before the meeting when making a booking - one week is advisable.
- Ensure you state any preferences - gender, dialect, experience of working with education, the name of previous interpreter used etc.
- Ensure that office staff know an interpreter will be arriving and that there is adequate space for waiting.
- Also ensure that there is a suitable private space for the meeting/assignment free for the full time.
- Allow at least double the time as you would allow if an interpreter was not required.
- It is good practice to allow 15 minutes before the meeting/assignment to run through the purpose of the meeting with the interpreter.
- Consider the best seating arrangement (if applicable) - the interpreter should be seated next to the parent but also to be able to easily see and hear others too.
- Ensure you cancel the interpreter if the meeting/assignment can no longer go ahead. You can use a telephone interpreter to confirm that the parent/carer is not attending. If known, please cancel at least 24 hours in advance.

3.2.2 **The meeting/assignment:**

- Confirm that language and dialect are correct
- Introduce those present and their roles.

- Remind all that the interpreter is there to interpret and that all information will be treated by the interpreter as confidential.
- Remind those present that they can ask for clarification if needed.
- Try to avoid looking only at the interpreter - look at the person who the comment is directed at or who is speaking.
- Keep sentences short but complete. Speak clearly and correctly but not too quickly. Speak in short blocks - The interpreter will need to remember what you have said and then interpret.
- Avoid jargon and idioms where possible.
- Be aware of potential cultural differences/misunderstandings. What we perceive as normal is based on our personal experiences. For example in some languages it is not usual to say please when asking for something and so parents may appear to be rude when they are just asking for something in the way they always do. Another example is that parents may have different experiences of education and so may not have knowledge of school routines and concepts that we may take for granted (school holidays, expectations of how parents will be involved in education, homework, learning through play, the Scottish Curriculum etc.)
- Never have a conversation while discussion is in the other language.
- Ensure you keep control of the meeting and cover all of the points on the agenda - it is important to make sure you make the most of having an interpreter.
- Not everything will translate easily into another language - lengthy explanation may be required for something that did not take many words in English (or vice versa).
- Ask the parent/carer to summarise his/her understanding and ask if she/he has any questions.

3.2.3 After the meeting/assignment:

- Sign paperwork for the interpreter - make a note of the start and finish time. Make sure you keep a copy of the paperwork to confirm that the job took place.
- Give honest feedback.
- Do not ask the interpreter for their opinion - they are there to interpret (Unless it is a First Language Assessment).

3.3 *Translation:*

- Allow at least a week for a translation to be completed.
- Where possible make translations generic so that they can be reused.
- Ensure the document is exactly how you want it prior to translation.
- Ensure unnecessary information is removed. What information does the target audience need to know? How can you make the format more accessible?

4 Appendix A – Council Language Statement

Copied from the following [link](#)

Translation of documents into other languages

Translation of documents into other languages

Documents should be translated into a different language when:

- It is specifically targeted at people from an ethnic minority group.
- There is no other alternative to reach to the specific group of service users, for instance, when a request is being made from a sensory impaired person.

Please note that there is no legal requirement for services to translate every document into a variety of languages.

For standard Council publications, it is recommended that services include what is known as a **'language statement'** on key documents. Please note that language statements should be placed at the **front** of your document to allow greater accessibility.

Language statement:

If you need information from this document in an alternative language or in a Large Print, Easy Read, Braille or BSL, please telephone (input your service's number here).

Jeigu pageidaujate šio dokumento kita kalba arba atspausdinto stambiu šriftu, supaprastinta kalba, parašyta Brailio raštu arba britų gestų kalba, prašome skambinti (input your service's number here).

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații din acest document într-o altă limbă sau într-un format cu scrisul mare, ușor de citit, tipar pentru nevăzători sau în limbajul semnelor, vă rugăm să telefonați la (input your service's number here).

Jeśli potrzebowali będą Państwo informacji z niniejszego dokumentu w innym języku, pisanych dużą czcionką, w wersji łatwej do czytania, w alfabecie Braille'a lub w brytyjskim języku migowym, proszę o telefoniczny kontakt na numer (input your service's number here).

Ja jums nepieciešama šai dokumentā sniegtā informācija kādā citā valodā vai lielā drukā, viegli lasāmā tekstā, Braila rakstā vai BSL (britu zīmju valodā), lūdzu, zvaniet uz (input your service's number here).

Prior to submitting a request for a document to be translated, the service should engage with the customer making the request to ensure that they know:

- What information from the document a person wishes to be put in a different format/ translated into a different language? Or,
- A summary of the document can be offered to be translated/put into a different format

5 APPENDIX B: USE OF GROUPCALL/SEEMiS MESSENGER TO SEND TRANSLATED MESSAGES

Groupcall Messenger includes a translation facility that automatically translates a given message into a wide range of languages, which are linked to the home language of the message recipient(s), as recorded within SEEMiS.

Messenger uses Google Translate to complete the translation and, as discussed this can be prone to errors. Groupcall's translate feature should only be used for routine communication. The user should copy and paste the following message, including the council's language statement.

“Aberdeenshire Council will not be responsible for any errors or omissions as this translation was automatically generated by computer.”

If you need information from this document in an alternative language or in a Large Print, Easy Read, Braille or BSL, please telephone (input you service's number here).

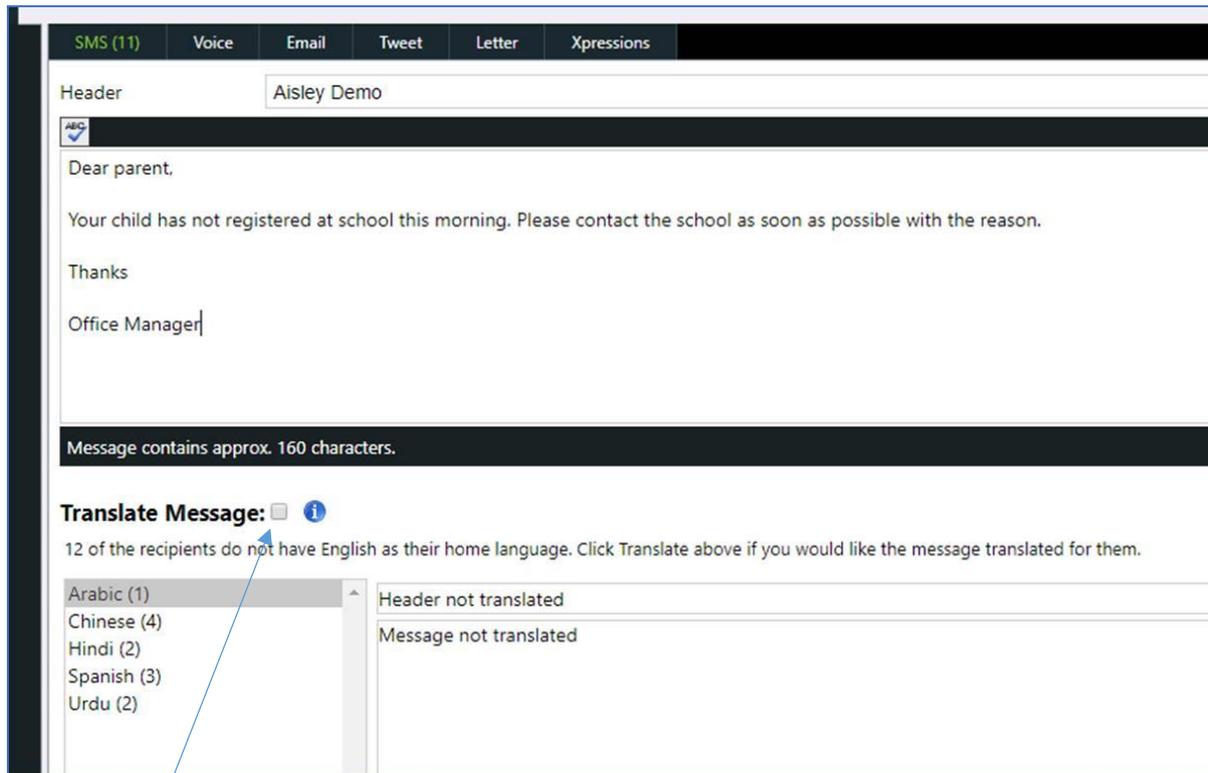
Jeigu pageidaujate šio dokumento kita kalba arba atspausdinto stambiu šriftu, supaprastinta kalba, parašyta Brailio raštu arba britų gestų kalba, prašome skambinti (input you service's number here).

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Within Messenger, in order to affect automatic translation of the message, the user needs to intervene to tick the “Translate Message” box when it appears. This box should only therefore be ticked should the user wish to use the translation feature, i.e.



Tick/Do not tick this box as appropriate

A bank of short common message types, already translated into the most commonly required languages has been developed, in order that these can be used to message families where the home language is not English , rather than via an original English text that has been “Google translated”. A number of these message types have been developed by the EAL service, but it is recognised that further work is required in order to further develop this and make them “Groupcall Messenger” usable.

In the above example, the “View translated content” option has been selected for the Spanish translation of the message. The message in this box can be reviewed and edited (as appropriate) before clicking on the “Update Translation” button.

In an emergency situation – for example an emergency snow closure due to rapidly deterioration weather conditions, or a health emergency where it is essential that the school contacts the parents/carers, a telephone interpreter should always be used. However if this proves unsuccessful, a suitable translated message may be available from the bank of translated comments. **Where all other options for contacting the parents/carers have been exhausted** and it is judged that a Groupcall message in the home language is more likely to convey the required message than one in English the message should be composed in straight forward and short sentences, to minimise the possibility of erroneous translation by Google translate.

Date	Version	Status	Reason
2018	1.0	Guidelines	New draft
October 2018		Guidelines	Amended guidance on Google Translate
November 2018		Guidelines	Addition of Appendix on Groupcall
April 2019		Guidelines	Amended advice on Groupcall
July 2019		Guidelines	Amended telephone number for telephone interpreting.
September 2019		Guidelines	Amended info on context and legislative background. Amended headers.
June 2020	1.1	Guidelines	Amended and added information on telephone interpreters.
January 2021	1.2	Guidelines	Amended and added information on telephone interpreters.
June 2021	1.3	Guidelines	Amend p1 reasons for jobs to be coordinated by EAL. Updated info on tel interpreting for new session – simpler process for booking
August 2022	1.4	Guidelines	Updated contact for telephone interpreting

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