



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

YOUNG INTERPRETER SCHEME

What is the Young Interpreter Scheme?

The scheme provides peer support to pupils who are learning English as an Additional Language (EAL). Piloted by Hampshire Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS) over 10 years ago, this is now an award-winning initiative running across the UK.

What is a Young Interpreter?

Young Interpreters are empathetic peers who support the well-being of newly-arrived EAL learners at school. Young Interpreters receive special training to help them in their role and are overseen by a designated member of staff – the Young Interpreter Co-ordinator.

What Does the Young Interpreter Co-ordinator do?

The Young Interpreter Co-ordinator is a designated member of school staff. They upskill themselves thanks to interactive guidance on our Moodle, train the pupils with resources we provide and meet the YIs regularly to make sure they are involved in activities that sustain motivation in their role (plenty of activities are available on Moodle).

Having a member of school staff drive the scheme forward not only enables successful implementation of the scheme but also helps make sure the pupils are guided into their role and used appropriately around the school (guidance around safeguarding is available on our Moodle). There is therefore one person in charge of the YI scheme in each school and each school registers for access to Moodle (this costs £70 per school unless you have access to the London Grid for Learning, in which case you can simply log into their portal).

What Age Group is This Scheme For?

Young Interpreters can be trained from Year 1 up to Year 11. Their training is differentiated by Key Stage and consists of four sessions aimed at giving them the tools to carry out their role safely and confidently.

Should Young Interpreters Speak More Than One Language?

The role of Young Interpreter is to be an empathetic buddy hence Co-ordinators can involve pupils who may not consider themselves fluent but who may understand another language and pupils who speak English only - in addition to multilingual learners. Together these pupils will learn how to engage with new arrivals during their training, including when there isn't a shared language.

Why Select English-Only Speakers to Train as Young Interpreters When They Cannot Offer Another Language?

Just like learners with EAL, English-only speakers have much to bring to the Young Interpreter Scheme® in terms of empathy, kindness and friendliness. Alongside EAL pupils, they welcome new arrivals and make these pupils feel settled from the start thanks to strategies acquired through their training. Making the scheme available to both bilingual and monolingual learners is very powerful in developing empathy amongst English speakers towards some of the challenges and difficulties that pupils new to English may be facing.

What Do Young Interpreters Do?

Once trained, Young Interpreters can be buddied up with new arrivals to show them around the school, demonstrate school routines, play games, spend break and lunch times together and any other school activity which requires everyday language. Young Interpreters do not replace professional interpreters or bilingual assistants and should not be expected to support with new academic content. There is guidance on how to use Young Interpreters appropriately in the YI implementation e-guide.

How Should I Select the Pupils to Take Part?

Young Interpreter Co-ordinators can promote the scheme through assemblies and ask pupils to apply for the role. They can also nominate and invite pupils to take part. Material aimed at promoting the scheme at school is provided.