



**An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna**
Department of
Education and Skills

Frequently Asked Questions on the Reconnecting with School Summer Camp Programme for DEIS Primary Schools

What are the aims of the Reconnecting with School Summer Camp Programme for DEIS Primary Schools?

The Department of Education and Skills, through the Teacher Education Section, has provided funding for several years, to a number of DEIS Band 1 primary schools to organise a week long Literacy and Numeracy Summer Camp through the Summer Camp Programme/Campaí Samhraidh. Participating schools can elect to organise an English medium camp or a Campa as Gaeilge.

The programme is funded to target educational and social disadvantage. It seeks to assist pupils who are experiencing social or academic difficulties in language and numeracy and who would benefit from a week-long Summer Camp with a very small teacher-pupil ratio.

The Summer Camp Programme which has been extended to all DEIS Primary Schools in 2020 will support pupils' wellbeing, their sense of connectedness and enable them to re-connect with peers and teachers and to promote their re-engagement with school. The emphasis of the programme is on supporting those pupils who are considered by the school as having the greatest level of need, particularly in relation to the themes of the school's DEIS action plan.

The aims of the Summer Camp Programme are to:

- Support pupils' social, physical and emotional wellbeing.
- Enable pupils to build relationships with peers, teachers and to support their reconnection with school

Provide a variety of rich educational experiences for pupils in a range of environments, fostering a sense of their wellbeing, belonging and creativity, and which promotes their confidence in learning.

Will public health guidelines be available to schools in advance of running a camp?

Schools are required to operate camps in accordance with the relevant public health guidelines. The Department has requested advice from the health authorities in relation to the re-opening of schools and the operation of a summer education programme. The Department will ensure that advice is made available to schools before the beginning of summer education programmes.

How should schools select students to attend the camps?

Schools are free to target the cohort of pupils they feel most appropriate, based on their social, educational or wellbeing needs, assessment outcomes, early intervention and age-cohorts. Most camps will have a teacher-pupil ratio of 1:12 with a total of 36 pupils. However, the Department will also facilitate Summer Camps comprising 2 teachers and 24 pupils.

What funding is provided to schools to run the camps?

A grant is payable and is comprised of €900 gross per teacher, which includes all planning before the camp and administration during and after the camp. €6 per pupil per day towards expenses including resources and lunches.

Subject to the school confirming that will adhere to the terms and conditions of the Summer Camp programme, the full grant will be paid by Dublin West / Navan Education Centre to your school's bank account via electronic funds transfer (EFT) before the camp commences.

When can a school run their week long camp?

It is a matter for the school to decide on which week is most appropriate to run the summer camp. However, it may be optimal to provide a Summer Camp Programme during August and as close to the reopening of school as possible.

Activities should be organised for 22.5 hours over 5 days, from Monday to Friday inclusive.

Will training be provided to teachers running summer camps?

Training will be provided for all teachers participating in the Summer Camp Programme. Attendance is compulsory. The training will consist of a number of live webinars.

The webinars will cover important aspects such as supporting teachers' and pupils' wellbeing, learning environments, playful teaching methodologies, the library visit, and also planning and assessment and administrative requirements.

Training sessions for the delivery of Summer Camp Programme will be hosted by Dublin West/Navan Education Centres at the end of June. Further details will issue to all participating schools.

Further support by phone or e-mail will be available to support schools running camps. Contact details will be made available at training. Links to useful resources are available on the Education centres' websites, and also Scoilnet, NCSE, NEPS and PDST.

A Hand Book to support the organisation and delivery of the Summer Camp Programme is available as a PDF document on the websites of Navan Education Centre and Drumcondra Education Centre.

Will camps be subject to inspection or evaluation?

No formal inspections will be conducted. However, the Inspectorate play a role in advising on and supporting the work of the Summer Camp Provision. An inspector will make contact with some camp organisers to arrange a time that will be suited for a conversation about the work of the camp, to affirm the work and also to offer advice and support.

The conversations will provide an overview to Teacher Education Section on the work of the camps and teachers' views on the potential impact of the programme on supporting pupils' re-connecting with their peers and school again.

What is the application process for schools?

To facilitate the extension of the Summer Camp Programme to all DEIS primary schools, a simplified application process is in place. If your school would like to participate in the Summer Camp Programme, you should complete the Expression of Interest form included with this letter. The completed form must be submitted to campaisamhraidh@dwec.ie no later than **Monday June 22nd 2020**.

You are required to have the summer camp included on the list of school activities in your schools Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment document. If not already listed, it must be added (the addition can be approved at the next Board of Management Meeting).

A copy of the relevant **section/page** of the Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment document where the Summer Camp Programme is listed as one of the school's activities **must** accompany the expression of interest form.