

Policy on Gaeltacht Education 2017-2022



GAELTACHT SCHOOL RECOGNITION SCHEME



An Chomhairle um Oideachas
Gaeltachta & Gaelscolaíochta



Gaeiloideachas 
Guth don Oideachas Lán-Ghaeilge



AN ROINN DEPARTMENT OF
OIDEACHAIS EDUCATION
AGUS SCILEANNA AND SKILLS

The first steps in the implementation of the Policy 2017/18

What are the objectives of the Policy on Gaeltacht Education?

The main objective of the *Policy* is to provide a high quality and relevant Irish-medium education for young people in Gaeltacht schools and, in this way, to support and encourage the use of Irish in Gaeltacht communities.

It is a *Policy* objective to:

- Support and improve the quality of Irish-medium instruction in Gaeltacht schools and early-years' settings, so that Irish-medium instruction will be the first choice of parents in each of the Gaeltacht areas
- Support appropriate Irish-medium educational provision for children and young people who are being raised through Irish
- Foster innovation and excellence in the delivery of Irish-medium education.

How may our school achieve the Policy objective?

Your school can play a significant role in the implementation of the *Policy* by participating in the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme.

What is the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme?

Under the *Policy*, schools located in Gaeltacht language-planning areas may express interest in participating in the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme. In order to achieve recognition as a Gaeltacht school, schools are required to operate fully through the medium of Irish (with the exception of the English curriculum and other languages), as set out in the *Policy's* language-based criteria. Schools will be enabled to achieve this recognition over a five-year period.

How may our school participate in the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme?

In April 2017 schools in Gaeltacht language-planning areas will be invited to take part in the *Scheme*. As a first step, schools that are interested in participating in the *Scheme* will need to make that decision in consultation with the school community and inform the Department of Education and Skills of their expression of interest.

What must our school do to achieve recognition as a Gaeltacht School?

Schools that participate in the *Scheme* must develop an action plan through their school self-evaluation process. The action plan will illustrate clearly the way in which the school will satisfy the requirements of the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme processes in a phased way. It will also show how the school will develop links with the local community to foster the use of Irish. Schools will be enabled to achieve this recognition over a five-year period.

What initial supports will be provided to our school in order to achieve recognition as a Gaeltacht school?

In the School year 2017/18, the initial supports will include, on a phased basis, targeted continuing professional support (CPD) as the recognition process commences, and as

each step of the process is achieved satisfactorily. A list of the initial supports are outlined below:

- **Seminars for school communities:** An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG), in collaboration with the Department of Education and Skills and other relevant parties, will coordinate seminars intended to raise the awareness of boards of management, parents and representatives from language-planning committees of the benefits of Irish-medium education in order to support and enhance the provision of high-quality Irish-medium education in schools participating in the *Scheme*.
- **Continuing Professional Development (CPD):** Additional CPD will be provided for primary schools, special schools and post-primary schools participating in the *Scheme*. This CPD will be co-ordinated by COGG in conjunction with relevant support services and the Inspectorate. Follow-up workshops will also be provided in school clusters.
- **Additional release/administrative days for primary schools and special schools** participating in the *Scheme* for the purpose of supporting the action-planning process from September to December 2017.
- **Additional hours, relative to school size, for post-primary schools participating in the *Scheme*** with the purpose of supporting the action-planning process from September to June 2018.
- **Inspectorate Support:** A dedicated team of inspectors will provide advice, support and feedback to primary schools, special schools, and post-primary schools participating in the *Scheme* on their whole-school action planning processes for improvement.
- **Grant allocation:** On approval of a school's whole-school action plan for improvement, and in support of the implementation of the action plan, a grant will be allocated to the primary schools, special schools and post-primary schools participating in the *Scheme*, to pay for additional resources that are specifically related to Irish-medium educational provision.
- **Piloting the establishment of an Irish-medium e-learning hub:** The Department intends to explore the possibility of establishing an Irish-medium e-learning hub in a post-primary school that is participating in the *Scheme* to connect with classrooms in other post-primary schools in the *Scheme*. This would facilitate the provision of virtual-learning opportunities among schools in order to extend the range and variety of curriculum options available to students through the full post-primary cycle.
- **Extend the provision of newly-qualified teachers for Irish-medium education at post-primary level:** The Department of Education and Skills has provided additional resources to support the Professional Master of Education programme in National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG) in order to enhance the supply of post-primary teachers who are proficient to teach through the medium of Irish.
- **Supports for early-years settings:** The Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and Údarás na Gaeltachta are responsible for providing supports for the provision of high quality Irish-medium early-years education in Gaeltacht language-planning areas. The Inspectorate is committed also to the work of inspection activities that are directed at providing Irish-medium education of a high standard in early-years settings that operate through the medium of Irish.

Will additional supports be provided to our school under this Policy in the future?

Yes. Over the lifetime of the *Policy on Gaeltacht Education 2017-2022*, it is anticipated that the range of supports for recognised Gaeltacht schools will be extended. Details will be available on the website of the Department in advance of each school year.

What are the other actions of the Policy?

The other actions that are designed to support the implementation of the *Policy* over a five-year term are set out under the following headings:

- Strengthening the structure of educational provision
- Improving the quality of teaching through Irish
- Building the capacity of school leaders and school management
- Improving the curriculum for Irish
- Improving language resources and supports
- Strengthening early-years' educational provision
- Building awareness of the benefits of Irish-medium education, communicating with and supporting parents.

How will the supports be co-ordinated?

Additional resources have been allocated by the Department of Education and Skills to An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG) to assist in the provision of additional support and resources for schools so that there will be a successful outcome to the implementation of the *Policy*. COGG will have an additional role in the co-ordination and delivery of particular supports and initiatives for Irish-medium Gaeltacht education in collaboration with the Gaeltacht Education Unit, national support services and other agencies.

The Gaeltacht Education Unit was established by the Department of Education and Skills to oversee and support the implementation of the *Policy*. The Department's Inspectorate will support the work of the Unit; the Inspectorate will support schools and will monitor and report on the effectiveness of the *Policy*. In this support work with schools, the Inspectorate will work closely with COGG and the various school and leadership support services that will collaborate with COGG.

This pamphlet, circulars for schools, and further information on the *Policy on Gaeltacht Education 2017-2022* are available at:

<http://www.education.ie/en/The-Department/Management-Organisation/Gaeltacht-Education-Unit.html>

Further information is available at:

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