

**To Boards of Management, Principal Teachers and Teaching Staff of
recognised English-Medium Post-Primary Schools and Chief Executives of
Education and Training Boards**

Implementing the Action Plan for Irish in English-Medium Schools

1. Purpose of this circular

This circular provides guidance to recognised English-medium post-primary schools on the implementation of Is féidir liom, is féidir linn ... Action Plan for Irish in English-Medium Schools and on the supports available to schools and teachers to implement the plan. It also clarifies expectations of the approaches to be adopted to support the effective teaching, learning and use of Irish.

2. Teaching of Irish in English-medium schools

Irish is a core subject in all post-primary schools. English-medium schools play a vital role in enabling all students to enjoy Irish and experience success in learning it. For many young people that attend these schools, the Irish classroom is the main site in which they encounter the Irish language and where they have the most sustained exposure to Irish.

A central feature of the post-primary specifications and syllabuses for Irish is the development of students' communicative competence in Irish. The post-primary specifications and syllabuses for Irish also place a strong emphasis on the development of positive attitudes towards Irish, the authentic use of Irish within and outside lessons, the provision of engaging and enjoyable learning experiences and the facilitation of all learners in accordance with their abilities to learn and communicate in Irish.

3. The Action Plan for Irish in English-Medium Schools

Is féidir liom, is féidir linn ... Action Plan for Irish in English-Medium Schools was launched on 6 November 2025 and is available online for school leaders, teachers and schools.

The Action Plan was informed by an extensive consultation at national and school levels. It was also informed by research, Inspectorate reports and approaches to language planning for minority languages in other jurisdictions. The Action Plan particularly reflects the views of children and young people. The two reports on the consultation are available at the following links:

[Teaching and Learning Irish in English-Medium Schools: Literature Review and Perspectives of National Stakeholders](#)

[Teaching and Learning Irish in English-Medium Schools: Perspectives of Children, Young People, Parents, Teachers, Principals and Student Teachers](#)

This Action Plan aims to enhance the teaching, learning and use of Irish for students in English-medium schools. The plan supports schools and teachers to effectively enact the existing specification (Junior Cycle) and syllabuses (Senior Cycle) for Irish. Notably, it supports the development of students' oral language skills in Irish.

Many schools and teachers of Irish already provide innovative and creative opportunities for students to engage with the language both inside and outside the classroom. This plan builds on that strong foundation by supporting the sharing of inclusive good practice more widely and ensuring effective supports are in place.

Pillars

The plan is built on four key pillars:

- Fostering positive attitudes towards Irish
- Increasing the use of Irish
- Supporting access by all children and young people to learning Irish
- Integrating supports for Irish.

The pillars reflect the key elements that make a difference to language learning.

4. Leading the teaching, learning and use of Irish

The school leadership team, in collaboration with the subject department for Irish, plays a key role in creating the right culture to promote and support the teaching, learning and use of Irish in their school. School leaders should consider how to:

- use school self-evaluation (SSE) and school / department planning processes to reflect on provision for, and use of, Irish under the four pillars of the Action Plan (See Section 5 below)
- increase the visibility and audibility of Irish in the school
- celebrate the success and efforts of students and teachers
- enhance the language experience of students in lessons
- give students opportunities to use Irish outside of lessons
- support teachers and those championing the language in the school.

5. Planning for the teaching, learning and use of Irish

School leaders and Irish subject departments should consider how they can incorporate the Action Plan for Irish in English-Medium Schools into their school self-evaluation processes and curriculum planning and review processes.

For example, they may consider their current provision and possibilities for improvement with reference to the four pillars in the Action Plan as follows:

- How can we foster positive attitudes towards Irish among our staff and students?
- How can we increase the use of Irish by students, teachers and others in the school/classes?
- How can we adapt our teaching approaches to ensure that all students access the learning of Irish and experience success in learning it?
- How can we make better use of the supports and resources available for Irish?
- How can we share good practice for the teaching and learning of Irish within our school and learn from other schools and teachers?

6. Supporting the use of Irish

Use of Irish by students

As a language, it is essential that students have opportunities to hear, speak and use Irish. There are several steps that schools and Irish subject departments can take to ensure that students have sustained contact with the language.

Schools are encouraged to provide all students, to the greatest extent possible and in a meaningful way, with opportunities to learn Irish and to participate in Irish language and cultural activities at a level appropriate to their learning needs and to achieve a level of personal proficiency appropriate to their ability.

In planning for the timetabling of Irish, schools should ensure that students have frequent lessons in Irish each week. Schools are advised that, as far as practicable, the time allocation for Irish should be distributed across the relevant year groups to support continuity and progression in learning, while allowing for local flexibility in timetabling and variations in lesson duration. The time allocations for Irish are available in the relevant specifications, syllabuses and programme statements. A summary of these time allocations is available in Appendix A.

As the target language, Irish should be used primarily as the language of instruction during Irish lessons.

Schools may also provide opportunities beyond Irish lessons for students to engage with Irish. These may include:

- opportunities for informal use of Irish during the school day
- participation in initiatives such as the Gaelbhratach scheme
- inter-school activities through Irish
- engaging with local Irish language groups
- provision of recognition and rewards for students who use Irish
- promoting participation in summer courses in the Gaeltacht.

Schools may also extend students' exposure to the language through optional initiatives such as the department's Content and Language Integrated Learning

(CLIL) Project, which allows for other subjects to be taught through Irish where appropriate.

Use of Irish by teachers

Availing of opportunities to use Irish is a very important means for teachers of Irish and other relevant staff within the school of maintaining and developing their skills in the language. This includes using Irish where possible with students, teachers and other adults in the school, and conducting subject department meetings and subject learning and assessment review (SLAR) meetings through Irish.

It also includes availing of opportunities to use Irish outside of schools and participating in the teacher professional learning experiences (PLE) provided by Oide - the department funded support service for teachers and school leaders, An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG), the education support centres, and Irish language course providers (See Section 8 below).

Participation in An Gréasán do Mhúinteoirí Gaeilge (the professional teacher network for post-primary teachers of Irish) or collaborating with teachers in other schools offers professional and collegial benefits by connecting teachers of Irish with a wider community of practice. In addition, Gréasán Gaeilge na hEarnála Poiblí provides opportunities for teachers to hear about and participate in social activities through Irish.

Beyond the school itself, engaging in local and national Irish language events provides valuable opportunities for teachers to use the language authentically, and to strengthen both their linguistic and professional confidence. Other opportunities to use the language professionally include working in Coláistí Gaeilge or with the State Examinations Commission.

7. Curriculum and assessment developments

The attention of schools is brought to the following curriculum and assessment developments for Irish.

Examination bonus marks for work completed through Irish

Bonus marks for the completion of coursework (as part of an Additional Assessment Component) through Irish as well as the written examinations will apply to the State Examinations, in line with the criteria set out by the State Examinations Commission. These arrangements will take effect from 2027 onwards for Leaving Certificate and from 2028 onwards for Junior Cycle. Bonus marks for work completed through Irish is intended to encourage greater engagement with Irish across assessment components. All examination candidates, whether they are students in Irish-medium or English-medium schools, are entitled to participate, and schools should bring the scheme to the attention of their students. Further details are available in Circular 0002/2026 and State Examinations Commission Circular S10/26.

Senior Cycle Redevelopment

The redevelopment of Leaving Certificate Established Irish is currently underway as part of Tranche 4 of the Senior Cycle Redevelopment Programme, in line with the department's phased approach to updating subject specifications across the senior cycle. It is envisaged that the revised specification will be introduced in schools in

September 2028. The report on the consultation on the background papers and briefs for the review of Tranche 4 subjects published in February 2026 includes feedback on the development of the new revised specification for Irish. The report and further information is available at [Gaeilge- Senior Cycle Curriculum Developments | NCCA](#).

Follow-on review of early implementation of Junior Cycle Irish

In May 2025, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment published the initial interim report arising from the follow-on review of the implementation of the Junior Cycle Irish specifications (L1 and L2). This report forms part of a three-year study examining the enactment of the specifications in schools and is available at [Gaeilge- Junior Cycle Curriculum Developments | NCCA](#). The second interim report is due to be published shortly and will provide further evidence and analysis to inform the ongoing review and future development of Junior Cycle Irish.

8. Supports for schools and teachers

There is a range of supports in place to support the implementation of the Action Plan.

- Information on supports provided by Oide to support schools' engagement with the Action-Plan is available at www.oide.ie. These supports include ongoing professional learning experiences, in-school support and summer courses.

Schools can book professional learning experiences via the event booking section of the Oide website at <https://dms.oide.ie/event/public>.

Queries regarding these supports or event booking can be sent to eolas@oide.ie.

- Information on the Department's Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) project is available at [20-year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030](#).
- Information on supports provided by COGG including free courses and resources are available at www.cogg.ie.
- The portal for Gaeltacht scholarships to students in DEIS post-primary schools in summer 2027 will open on the website of Galway Roscommon Education and Training Board in Quarter 4 2026. All post-primary DEIS schools will be contacted inviting them to participate in the scheme. Queries regarding the Gaeltacht scholarships can be sent to scolaireachtaideis@gretb.ie.
- Information on supports provided by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) for Junior Cycle Irish is available at [Junior Cycle Irish | Curriculum Online](#). These include Assessment Guidelines for Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) and Assessment Task, sample assessment items, and samples of student work.

- Information on updates, events and other supports provided by the NCCA for Irish, including Senior Cycle Irish, is available at [Supports for learning and teaching Irish | NCCA](#).
- Local education support centres provide a range of supports to teachers for Irish and the teaching of Irish. Information on these supports is available on local education support centre websites or in the communications to schools from individual centres.
- A list of Irish language course providers for adults is available at [Scéal.ie](#).

The Aonad don Ghaeilge um Scoileanna Meán-Bhéarla in the department will also issue a newsletter each term with updates on supports for schools in relation to the Action Plan.

9. Further information

For further information, please contact AGSMB@education.gov.ie.

Issued by:

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An tAonad Gaeilge um Scoileanna Meán-Bhéarla

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Appendix A Time allocations for Irish

Junior Cycle Irish: English-medium schools (L2) specification (2023): minimum of 240 hours across the three years of Junior Cycle

Transition Year Programme Statement (2024): maximum of 2 hours per week.

Leaving Certificate Irish Higher and Ordinary Level Syllabuses (2010): minimum of 180 hours across the two years of Leaving Certificate

Leaving Certificate Irish Foundation Level Syllabus (2010): minimum of 180 hours over the two years of Leaving Certificate

Leaving Certificate Applied Programme Statement (2024), Leaving Certificate Applied Communicative Irish Syllabus (2010): minimum of 60 hours in total (30 hours each per module)