Circular 0010/2019

POLICY ON GAELTACHT EDUCATION 2017-2022

**POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN GAELTACHT LANGUAGE-PLANNING AREAS
PARTICIPATING IN THE GAELTACHT SCHOOL RECOGNITION SCHEME**

**NEXT IMPLEMENTATION PHASE
(May 2019 – August 2020)**

**TO BOARDS OF MANAGEMENT, PRINCIPALS AND TEACHING STAFF OF POST-PRIMARY
SCHOOLS IN GAELTACHT LANGUAGE-PLANNING AREAS, AND TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVES OF
EDUCATION AND TRAINING BOARDS**

1. **Purpose of Circular**

The purpose of this Circular is to notify school authorities of the next steps to be taken by the Department of Education and Skills (Department) and by post-primary schools in relation to the continuing implementation of the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme (*Scheme)* in 2019/2020. This Circular follows on from Circulars 0034/2017 and 0022/2018, which outlined the initial implementation phases covering the period from April 2017 to April 2019.

Summary of key points to Note:

-   The first phase of implementation of the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme to strengthen immersion education[1] in schools commenced in September 2018. The *Scheme* is now moving into its next phase of implementation.

-   Schools participating in the *Scheme* should continue to review existing targets and identify new targets and actions to meet the language-based criteria to strengthen immersion education and extend the use of Irish in order to obtain recognition as a Gaeltacht school.

-   Targeted supports will continue to be provided to support schools' participation in the *Scheme* including Irish-language support hours, a grant for resources in Irish, additional continuing professional development (CPD) and Inspectorate advisory visits.

---

[1] In the context of a Gaeltacht post-primary school, immersion education refers to the practice of teaching all curriculum areas entirely through the medium of Irish, apart from the English and foreign language curriculums.

An tAonad um Oideachas Gaeltachta, Sráid Maoilbhríde, Baile Átha Cliath 1, D01 RC96
Gaeltacht Education Unit, Marlborough St, Dublin 1, D01 RC96
T +353 1 889 6408 | AOG@education.gov.ie
www.education.ie

Appendices attached to this Circular:

Appendix 1: Language-based criteria for recognition as a Gaeltacht post-primary school (Circular 0034/2017)

Appendix 2: Sample Action-Planning Template to assist schools in implementing the language-based criteria to strengthen immersion education.

2. **Programme of supports for post-primary schools in the *Scheme* (May 2019 - August 2020)**

As set out in Circulars 0034/2017 and 0022/2018, post-primary schools participating in the *Scheme* and working to fulfil the language-based criteria (**Appendix 1**) through action-planning to strengthen immersion education, will be eligible to access the following resources and supports in 2019/2020:

- **Additional part-time Irish-language support hours: Irish-language support hours** will be allocated to post-primary schools participating in the *Scheme* as follows**:**

Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme – post-primary	
Post-primary school enrolment	**Number of additional Irish-language support hours per week for 2019-2020**
< 150	7
150-300	9
>300	10

The Irish-language support hours should be used solely to support the identified needs of native speakers and learners of Irish to develop and enrich their proficiency skills in Irish, particularly oral Irish. For guidance on the use of these Irish-language support hours, schools should consult the Department of Education and Skills' publication, *Guidance Note for Gaeltacht Primary and Post-Primary Schools – Advisory Visits of the Inspectorate and the Use of Additional Part-Time Hours to Support Irish*. The use of these hours will be monitored during Inspectorate advisory visits.

The Irish-language support hours will be allocated to post-primary schools on the Staffing Schedule and schools will be expected to manage the allocation of these Irish-language support hours effectively to ensure the maximum benefit for pupils' Irish-language learning.

From September 2019, where a post-primary school is in a supernumerary position and a teacher is awarded a contract of indefinite duration (CID) as a result of the school's allocation for the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme, the CID hours will be offset against the Gaeltacht recognition allocation.

- **Grant allocation:** In June 2019, a grant of €1,200 will be paid to each post-primary school participating in the *Scheme.* The grant is allocated for the purchase of resources in Irish to support the provision of high-quality immersion education. A list of resources in Irish can be accessed on An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG) website at www.cogg.ie. Post-primary schools are required to retain all receipts and records of expenditure incurred for

audit purposes in accordance with public procurement and financial procedures (see provisions of Department of Public Expenditure and Reform: Circular 0013/2014). School authorities must also ensure that the requirements of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and the Department of Education and Skills are met in the public procurement, usage and disposal of assets.

- **Continuing Professional Development (CPD):** Post-primary schools participating in the *Scheme* will be provided with additional CPD, co-ordinated by COGG in conjunction with relevant support services and the Inspectorate. Where necessary, and as resources permit, substitution for attendance at seminars/workshops will be provided in 2019 through the Online Claims System (OLCS) or under the management of the relevant Education and Training Board (ETB), up to a maximum of 2 days for 2 attendees in participating post-primary schools in 2019. These days may be claimed from the OLCS by selecting the following options: *Continuing Professional Development/Professional Activities - Gaeltacht Education Policy/Polasaí um Oideachas Gaeltachta*. It is intended that there will be one day school closure in Autumn 2019 for each post-primary school participating in the *Scheme* to enable all teaching staff attend the CPD provided. Details in relation to CPD plans for schools participating in the *Scheme* will be provided by COGG.

- **Inspectorate Support**: Inspectors will conduct advisory visits to support post-primary schools participating in the *Scheme* in the implementation and ongoing review of targets set and actions taken to fulfil the Irish-language based criteria to strengthen immersion education.

- **The E-hub pilot project:** The additional support provided for the implementation of the e-Hub pilot project in the two selected post-primary schools will continue during the period 2019 to 2021. The aim of the pilot project is to extend the range of subject options that are available through Irish for students in post-primary schools in the Gaeltacht. The focus of this online pilot project will be on higher-level Leaving Certificate Physics. Additional funding for information and communications technology (ICT) resources and student supervision arrangements will be provided to the receiver post-primary schools selected for the higher-level Leaving Certificate Physics pilot project from September 2019.

- **Forás:** The implementation of the pilot Irish-language development programme *(Forás)* will continue in the 2019/2020 school year in the two post-primary schools already selected. This pilot programme involves the allocation of one additional whole-time equivalent teacher to each of the two selected post-primary schools. This additional support will assist junior cycle students, beginning with first years, who have an evident need to develop their Irish-language skills over a transitional period so that they can beneficially access the curriculum through the medium of Irish.

- **Indicators of Good Practice in Immersion Education: Draft Guide for Gaeltacht Post-Primary Schools (2018):** This Guide provides practical support for post-primary schools in implementing immersion education. The Guide can be used to:
    - reflect on teaching and learning practices through the medium of Irish
    - guide professional discussion on learning, teaching, management and leadership in relation to the implementation of immersion education
    - affirm good practice in immersion education
    - identify targets and actions to fulfil the language-based criteria for immersion education.

The Guide will be revised in 2019 and will take account of feedback from schools and education partners.

3. Whole-school action-planning to strengthen immersion education

School self-evaluation facilitates schools to engage in a cyclical action-planning process that includes regular review. The action-planning process should involve the gathering of evidence, making judgements, setting smart targets, implementing actions, monitoring and reviewing progress against targets and the setting of new targets strengthen the quality of Irish-medium education.

An example of a revised action-planning template, to support schools in fulfilling the language-based criteria for recognition as a Gaeltacht post-primary school, is provided in **Appendix 2** and at the **LINK.** Schools may use this template and adapt it to suit its own particular school context.

Schools participating in the DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) programme are required to develop and implement action plans for improvement under the DEIS plan 2017 on specific themes.[2] Targets and actions in respect of the DEIS themes as well as those linked to language-based criteria related to immersion education, and/or any other priority area(s), should be incorporated into **one clearly-labelled action-planning document.** Schools should create a short summary of the self-evaluation report and school improvement plan and share it with the school community annually.

4. Evaluation of the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme

The *Scheme* is based on the ongoing development and enhancement of immersion education whereby the school self-evaluation (SSE) process is used to guide the identification and implementation of targets and actions, and to foster purposeful links between the school community and local language-planning committees to extend the use of Irish.

As set out in the Policy on Gaeltacht Education 2017-2022, an evaluation study of the impact of the implementation of the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme in schools will commence in 2019. This evaluation study will be conducted by the Educational Research Centre (ERC) in collaboration with the Inspectorate during the period 2019 to 2022. The Inspectorate will commence an external evaluation of immersion education, in the 2019/2020 school year, in the schools participating in the *Scheme* from its inception.

The main purpose of this evaluation study will be to measure the extent to which the implementation of the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme has met the objectives of the *Scheme* and Policy on Gaeltacht Education 2017-2022. The findings from the evaluation study will identify the strengths of the *Scheme* and inform further improvement in the provision of high quality Irish-medium education to gain recognition as a Gaeltacht school.

The continuing participation of post-primary schools in the *Scheme* will be contingent on satisfying the conditions of this Circular and any other circulars relating to the *Scheme.* Where the Department, at any time, determines that the conditions of the *Scheme* are not being fulfilled, the right is reserved to remove a school from the *Scheme.* In case of dissatisfaction with the Department's decision regarding

---

[2] DEIS Plan 2017 themes: Attendance, retention, progression, literacy and numeracy, leadership, wellbeing, continuing professional development (CPD), transitions, partnership with parents and examination attainment.

any specific aspect of the administration of the *Scheme*, an appeal will be considered by an independent panel.

5. Further Information/FAQs

The Gaeltacht Education Unit in the Department of Education and Skills will continue to oversee, manage and support the implementation of the *Policy on Gaeltacht Education 2017-2022* and the *Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme* in this next implementation phase.

Additional information and updates on the *Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme* and on the *Policy on Gaeltacht Education 2017-2022* are published regularly on the Department's website. A frequently-asked questions (FAQs) document is also available on the Department's website and will continue to be updated.

Queries in relation to the operation of the *Scheme* or the *Policy on Gaeltacht Education* should be emailed to **aog@education.gov.ie** or addressed to: **An tAonad um Oideachas Gaeltachta, An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna, Sráid Maoilbhríde, Baile Átha Cliath 1, DO1 RC96**

Principals of post-primary schools in Gaeltacht language-planning areas are asked to please bring this Circular to the attention of each member of the board of management/Education and Training Boards, teachers (including those on leave of absence), the school patron, ancillary staff, parents/guardians, and the local school community. This Circular can be accessed on the Department's website at the following LINK.

Dr Treasa Kirk
Head, Gaeltacht Education Unit
Department of Education and Skills

February 2019

Appendix 1
Language-based criteria for recognition as a Gaeltacht post-primary school (Circular 0034/2017)

1.	Extend the availability of a full curriculum through Irish, apart from the English and other language curricula, as the Gaeltacht school moves towards a total-immersion approach.
2.	Deliver high quality educational experiences through Irish to all students focusing particular attention on the differentiated language needs of native Irish speakers[3] as well as learners of Irish.
3.	Develop a whole-school action plan for improvement that will: • set out how the school will ensure the use of Irish as the language of communication, instruction and socialisation within the school and • communicate and promote the benefits of learning Irish and learning through Irish to the school community (principal, staff, students, parents and board of management).
4.	Review the quality of educational provision through Irish to ensure continuous improvement through the school self-evaluation (SSE) process.
5.	Implement L1 specification for Irish at Junior Cycle.
6.	Use Irish-language resources to support the teaching of all curricular areas through Irish, apart from the English curriculum.
7.	Deliver curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities (where provided) through Irish.
8.	Support their school community in the language-planning process (under the Gaeltacht Act, 2012) by contributing to the use and maintenance of Irish in the school and local Gaeltacht community.
9.	Prioritise the use of Irish in communicating with parents, the local community and other parties.
10.	Establish useful and mutually-beneficial language and cultural links with local Irish-medium post-primary schools and other Irish-medium primary schools.
11.	Make every effort to recruit teaching and ancillary staff who are proficient in Irish, and have a knowledge and understanding of pedagogical practice relevant to teaching through Irish as well as an understanding of the language and cultural dynamics of the Gaeltacht.

---

[3] A native speaker of Irish is defined as a child who is raised through Irish in an Irish-language community and whose parents speak Irish as the main language of communication in the home, such being declared at the point of enrolment for school (*Policy on Gaeltacht Education 2017-2022*, p 11)

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Aguisín 2

Teimpléad Samplach do Phlean Gníomhaíochta do chur i bhfeidhm na gcritéar teanga don tumoideachas

Ainm na Scoile		Uimhir Rolla	
Comhthéacs na scoile	Tabhair cuntas achomair soiléir le pointí urchair de réir mar atá ábhartha *(m.sh. líon foirne agus rollachán; stádas DEIS; comhthéacs teangeolaíochta na scoile; cleachtas reatha maidir leis an teagasc trí Ghaeilge; tacaíochtaí don Ghaeilge ar fáil sa scoil/sa phobal scoile; comhpháirtíocht le tuismitheoirí; nasc leis an gcoiste pleanála teanga; naisc le scoileanna eile/naíonraí &rl)* • • •		

Seo a leanas sampla de theimpléad a d'fhéadfaí a úsáid chun plean a dhearadh do chritéar teanga amháin a chur i bhfeidhm. D'fhéadfadh sprioc amháin nó níos mó a bheadh ag an scoil don chritéar sin. Is féidir an teimpléad a chóipeáil de réir mar is gá, ag brath ar líon na gcritéar teanga agus líon na spriocanna atá á chur i bhfeidhm sa tréimhse ama ar leith. Moltar plean a dhearadh do bhliain amháin ar dtús le go bhfeicfear an dul chun cinn atá déanta taobh istigh den tréimhse ama sin. Cé gur gá don scoil gach citéar teanga a bhaint amach chun aitheantas mar scoil Ghaeltachta a fháil, is de réir a chéile a dhéanfar an obair chuige sin. Ní gá don scoil pleanáil a

dhéanamh do gach gach critéar teanga a chur i bhfeidhm ag tús an phróisis. Leag amach go hachomair na sainghníomhartha atá molta ar mhaithe leis na spriocanna ginearálta thuas a bhaint amach.

Critéar Teanga:	
Anailís ar an bhfianaise a bailíodh chun an bonnlíne gnóthachtála a aimsiú don sprioc agus an dul chun cinn a rianú	

Sprioc a 1 chun an critéar teanga seo a bhaint amach

Tréimhse ama chun an sprioc a bhaint amach	
Ról Ceannasaíochta	

Critéir Ratha - cén toradh/toradh foghlama a bhainfear amach

Na gníomhartha a dhéanfar agus na hacmhainní a úsáidfear chun an sprioc a bhaint amach

An Mhonatóireacht a dhéanfar ar dhul chun cinn na foghlama

An Mheastóireacht agus an tAthbhreithniú a dhéanfar ar an gcur i bhfeidhm agus ar éifeacht an phlean	Dátaí athbhreithnithe

An Toradh a baineadh amach (le líonadh ag deireadh na tréimhse ama)

An chéad chéim eile (le líonadh ag deireadh na tréimhse ama)

Sprioc a 2 chun an critéar teanga seo a bhaint amach

Tréimhse ama chun an sprioc a bhaint amach	
Ról Ceannasaíochta	

Critéir Ratha - cén toradh/toradh foghlama a bhainfear amach

Na gníomhartha a dhéanfar agus na hacmhainní a úsáidfear chun an sprioc a bhaint amach

An Mhonatóireacht a dhéanfar ar dhul chun cinn na foghlama

An Mheastóireacht agus an tAthbhreithniú a dhéanfar ar an gcur i bhfeidhm agus ar éifeacht an phlean	**Dátaí athbhreithnithe**

An Toradh a baineadh amach (le líonadh ag deireadh na tréimhse ama)

An chéad chéim eile (le líonadh ag deireadh na tréimhse ama)