



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

A Guide for Gaeltacht Schools: Partnership with the community in promoting the use of Irish

Strengthening links between school management,
the school community and the local language-
planning process

June 2021

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1. Introduction

This guidance document provides practical advice for school leaders¹ in Gaeltacht schools as they devise plans to strengthen the partnership between the school and its community in order to promote the use of Irish. The wider community also has a role and responsibility in preserving and promoting the Irish language.

The school's participation in the language-planning process is particularly important to encourage the increased use of the Irish language in the local community, as is set out in the Gaeltacht Act, 2012. The Gaeltacht school, therefore, has a key role in fostering links with the language-planning officer who is employed to support the implementation of the language plan in the local Gaeltacht area. This means that the school plays a central role in promoting and fostering the use of Irish in the school and in the local Gaeltacht community.

2. Role of Gaeltacht schools in promoting the use of Irish

The Education Act 1998 states that a school situated in a Gaeltacht area will use the resources available to it to 'contribute to the maintenance of Irish as the primary language of the community'. The overarching goal of the Policy on Gaeltacht Education 2017-2022 is to ensure that a high quality and relevant educational experience through the medium of Irish is available to all young people living in Gaeltacht areas, thereby supporting the use of Irish as the main language of Gaeltacht families and communities. This objective is the same as the objective of the language-planning process, which has a statutory basis under the Gaeltacht Act 2012, and which is being widely implemented in Gaeltacht areas currently.

The Policy on Gaeltacht Education recognises that Gaeltacht areas are unique and have significant linguistic, cultural and economic importance. The Irish language, as the language of the home and community, is very vulnerable in Gaeltacht areas currently. The Policy confirms that the Gaeltacht is a resource for both fluent speakers and learners of Irish - a resource that could not be retrieved were it to be lost. The Policy highlights the importance of schools' participation in the local language-planning process in the Gaeltacht, a process which aims to promote Irish as the language of the community and the home in a systematic and integrated manner to increase the daily use of Irish in Gaeltacht areas. Údarás na Gaeltachta is responsible for co-ordinating this process throughout the Gaeltacht under the auspices of the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media (DTCAGSM).

As part of the language-planning process, three Gaeltacht towns have been designated as towns which could achieve recognition under the process, subject to the approval of language plans, and in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Gaeltacht Act 2012. These towns are Dungloe, Belmullet and Dingle. To date (25 May 2021), Dingle has achieved recognition as a Gaeltacht Service Town and DTCAGSM is currently reviewing a language plan for Dungloe. Of the 26 Gaeltacht Language-Planning areas assigned

¹ The term 'school leaders' typically refers to those who have formal school leadership roles (board of management, principal etc.) and also to those teachers who have undertaken specific leadership roles in the implementation of the whole-school action plan.

under the process, to date language plans have been approved in respect of 22 areas under this process². Further information on the language-planning process is available **HERE**.

Local community-based organisations have been identified in each language-planning area and are operating as lead language-planning organisations. The lead language-planning organisations are responsible for the implementation of the language plans approved by DTCAGSM, the management of the work programme and budget, and the employment of language-planning officers (LPOs) to implement the language plan with the support of Údarás na Gaeltachta. The community-based language-planning steering committees (LPSC) have a role also in providing advice, support and information to support the language-planning process. The members of the LPSC represent the communities within the LPA and the various domains included in the local language plan, including education. They support the lead organisation in the LPA and the LPO in meeting the objectives of the local language plan and in motivating the local community to be involved in the process. Given that schools are at the heart of the language-planning process, the guidance and support of the language-planning officer will be of great assistance when schools are designing an action plan to promote the use of Irish in the school community.

The actions detailed in the Policy on Gaeltacht Education are intended to strengthen the quality of education through the medium of Irish in Gaeltacht schools based on the principle of partnership and co-operation with local school communities. The Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme acknowledges that co-operation between schools and the lead language-planning organisations in the Gaeltacht, to support the implementation of the local language plan, is key to the implementation of the Scheme, as well as the fulfilment of the language-based criteria for immersion education. In the local language-planning process, there are language-based criteria that focus specifically on the participation of Gaeltacht schools in the process. The aim of those criteria is that Gaeltacht schools will “support their school community in the language-planning process (Gaeltacht Act, 2012) by contributing to the use and maintenance of Irish in the school and in the local Gaeltacht community.”

3. Role of the board of management of the school in implementing the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme

The board of management manages the school on behalf of the patron. The board, under the Education Act 1998, is responsible for the preparation, implementation, review and regular updating of a school plan to provide high-quality education for all pupils³ in the school. In this work, the board has a key role in ensuring that the aims in the Education Act 1998, the Policy on Gaeltacht Education 2017-2022, and the implementation of the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme, are realised. The board of management is

² In addition to the specific Gaeltacht towns, a further 13 towns located outside the Gaeltacht have been selected by the DTCAGSM as potential Gaeltacht Service Towns, following a public consultation process in 2014. Of these towns, language plans have been approved to date (25 May 2021) for Letterkenny and Galway City. Furthermore, language plans have been approved for 3 Irish Language Networks as defined under the Act, namely: Loughrea, Ennis and Clondalkin.

³ The term ‘pupils’ in this publication refers to both primary school pupils and post-primary students.

responsible for ensuring that a school development/action plan, is designed to achieve these aims in conjunction with the whole-school community, including the school patron.

The board of management oversees the implementation of the Scheme and the ongoing review of the work of the school in conjunction with the school community is a collaborative, comprehensive and reflective process. This is a process in which school management co-operates with the lead language-planning organisation/language-planning steering committee in the local Gaeltacht community to support the promotion of Irish in the area. Key to the success of the partnership will be the strength of the relationship between the language-planning officer and school management.

The principal and school staff play an important role in progressing the action-planning process in collaboration with parents/guardians and pupils. Through the school self-evaluation process, they can strive to ensure excellence in the provision of education through the medium of Irish for the Gaeltacht community.

This guide has been developed to assist the board of management in the implementation of immersion education in the school and to ensure that the language-based criteria central to the Scheme, are implemented effectively through the development of links with the local community and the language-planning committee. All schools in the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme are advised to include a reference in the school plan, to the co-operation between the local lead language-planning organisation/LPO/LPSC and the school as a fundamental element of their Irish language policy.

The board of management should ensure that:

- the community understands that the school is a Gaeltacht school
- Irish is the language used in all aspects of the work of the school
- the school maintains beneficial links with the community, early learning and care settings and other Gaeltacht/all-Irish schools to promote the Irish language
- a link is developed with the local lead language-planning organisation and that their different roles and responsibilities relating to the implementation of the school's language plan are referenced in the Irish-language policy, thus supporting co-operation between the school and the local lead language-planning organisation
- the school, seeks support, as appropriate, from organisations already operating in the community to support the language-planning process
- the pupil and his/her context are central to the language-planning process and that the support of families is drawn upon in order to gain a full understanding of that context
- all child protection procedures for schools are implemented (see **Appendix 1**)
- the appropriate data protection guidelines are adhered to in order to guide the proper management and sharing of information, particularly with respect to personal data. Further information is available from the Data Protection Commission at this **LINK**.
- Further information is available in Appendix 2 regarding the electronic booklet (Beatha Teanga), published by Gaeloideachas, to assist the whole-school community in their efforts to keep Irish at the heart of all interactions. Schools could derive great benefits from this resource and from other supports developed in the future in order to share good practice in schools on the communicative use of Irish.

4. Role of the Language-Planning Officer (LPO)

The language-planning officers, who are employed by the local lead language-planning organisations, funded by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and the Media (DTCAGSM), play a key role in the implementation of the language plan for local Gaeltacht areas.

The language-planning officer (LPO) acts as the first point of contact for the public and for organisations, associations and institutions in the local community who wish to participate in the language-planning process and support the promotion of the Irish language locally. In addition to implementing the actions in the language plan, the LPO can support voluntary groups, community organisations, clubs, associations, businesses and schools in the Gaeltacht in order to increase the use of Irish in the language planning area (LPA).

The language-planning officer is responsible for maintaining contact with the school principal to share relevant details and to discuss and agree on various activities to promote the use of Irish in the school community. In consultation with the principal, the LPO will agree on a plan to promote the use of Irish at the start of the school year that takes into account the needs and specific context of the school. When designing and agreeing on the plan, a range of different activities, such as those outlined in Table 1, are selected, which would be in keeping with the language plan designed for the local area and relevant to the language-based criteria for achieving recognition as a Gaeltacht school.

It is recommended that the school share the plan with parents/guardians and with the community in general to inform them of the approach and activities that will be undertaken as part of the plan. Schools are advised to provide to parents, a summary of progress made, in the school's self-evaluation report at the end of the school year. There is potential also for schools to share good practice with other schools through network meetings and communities of practice.

Table 1: *Activities the Language-Planning Officer might undertake to support schools in strengthening the use of Irish*

Examples of activities that could form part of an agreed plan between the school and the lead language-planning organisation
<p>For pupils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make the school aware of opportunities for using Irish outside of normal school hours (clubs, cafes, sporting events, sports camps etc.) and any other support facilities available.• Develop a support package for pupils who have limited Irish and who have come to live in a Gaeltacht area.• Organise various projects and workshops through the medium of Irish in subjects that are of interest to the pupils such as technology courses (Techspace in Irish), coding through Irish, Irish language debates, social media, environmental matters, the Gaisce programme, entrepreneurship, heritage, music, arts, drama etc.• Provide information on teachers/tutors with Irish who are available locally to provide additional classes through Irish (in sports, drama, music, for example).• Establish Irish-language committees to bring pupils together outside of school to hear the 'Student Voice' and assist with the establishment of a Coiste na nÓg that would work to promote Irish within and/or beyond the school.

- Organise workshops and projects to improve communication and leadership skills, such as radio projects, podcasts, film
- Establish an inter-school network or forum to promote the use of Irish in the school and beyond
- Facilitation of a visiting exchange scheme and pen pal scheme with other Irish-medium schools and Gaeltacht schools, to cultivate an awareness of various dialects
- Conduct workshops on language-planning issues, drawing on the experiences of other global minority languages
- Organise in-school or inter-school activities and/or competitions, for example, a football blitz, a quiz
- Organise local festivals for the Irish language to bring together the community that is interested in the language
- Support the promotion of sports programmes through the medium of Irish in conjunction with other organisations, for example, the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) and Muintearas
- Encourage pupils to write pieces for the local language-planning newsletter
- Support the organisation of work experience for Transition Year students with other Irish language organisations
- Keep the school informed of various programmes that are available through the medium of Irish for Transition Year, for example, the GAA programme, Future Leaders: Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta, TG4, and in the media in general
- Liaise with organisations such as the GAA, to ensure that coaches with proficiency in Irish are available for Gaeltacht schools.

For the school community and parents/guardians:

- Inform parents/guardians about the benefits and importance of immersion education, of the benefits of raising a family through Irish in the Gaeltacht, and provide an information pack on language-enrichment opportunities for these families
- Develop a support pack of Irish-language terminology and support system for parents/guardians who have limited Irish and make them aware of the supports that are available
- Inform parents of Irish-language classes/learning projects available or arrange classes/ conversation circles and/or other opportunities for them to use and to enrich their Irish
- Share or organise information on services, clubs, events and resources available through the medium of Irish for families, parents/guardians and pupils.

Further information is available in **Appendix 3** on other supports provided by the DTCAGSM for Gaeltacht schools.

5. Guidance for the board of management of a Gaeltacht school – indicators of good practice to promote the use of Irish

The continuum of improvement outlined below and the accompanying indicators of good practice outlined in Table 2 (and in Appendix 4) provide a guide for the board of management and school leaders to support the implementation of the language-based criteria for recognition as a Gaeltacht school.

Continuum of improvement			
1	2	3	4
No progress	Partial progress	Good progress	Very good progress

This continuum of improvement may be used to support the school in reviewing the success of its improvement plan and in monitoring, on an ongoing basis, the implementation of the particular language-based criteria under review.

Table 2: Language-based criteria⁴ and associated indicators of good practice

Criterion: Support the school community in the language-planning process by contributing to the use and promotion of Irish in the school and local Gaeltacht community
(i) The school is engaged in the local language-planning process, which has the specific target of increasing the number of daily Irish speakers in the community.
(ii) Representative(s) from the school are members of the local language-planning committee and/or are active in attempts to strengthen Irish as the language of the community in the area.
(iii) The school staff encourage the pupils to participate in the promotion of the language at school and in the community outside of the school.
(iv) There is worthwhile co-operation between the school, the community and the local lead language-planning organisation in implementing the educational elements of the local language plan and of the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme in the school.
(v) There is co-operation between school staff and management and other youth organisations in the area, that provide services/events for the pupils of the school.
(vi) The pupils of the school regularly participate in Irish activities in the community.
(vii) In so far as possible, pupils of the school present themselves through Irish at local/county/national level in any competitions in which they participate.
(viii) Every effort is made to provide the school community (parents/guardians, pupils, excellent Irish speakers in the community, members of the board) with an opportunity to have an input in the promotion of Irish in the school.

Table 3: Language-based criteria⁵ and associated indicators of good practice

Criterion: Prioritise the use of Irish in communicating with parents/guardians, the local community and other parties
(i) The school has a policy of prioritising the use of Irish with parents in every correspondence with them; that correspondence is prepared in Irish and an English translation is provided for those parents who need it. In the enrolment policy, as part of the pupil/student registration process, parents are given the opportunity to request correspondence in Irish or bilingually.

⁴ Language-based criteria for primary schools (number 9) and for post-primary schools (number 8)

⁵ Language-based criteria for primary schools (number 10) and for post-primary schools (number 9)

(ii) Meetings with parents are conducted through Irish only when possible or bilingually, if necessary, with priority given to Irish.
(iii) Irish is prioritised in any official correspondence with any local community/ state organisation with which the school is in contact.
(iv) The school maintains good relationships with parents/guardians through the provision of clear and helpful proactive feedback on an ongoing basis to support their children's progress and the school works co-operatively with parents to support their children's progress and learning. Priority is given to the Irish language in these interactions.
(v) Parents are encouraged to speak Irish with their children as frequently as possible, and especially in the school environment. Parents are reminded regularly that their children's progress in the language will be enhanced greatly if they receive a positive and encouraging example in relation to the use of Irish.

To support the self-evaluation process, the language-based criteria are outlined below and, together with practical tips and examples, provide guidance as to how the school may foster links with the community to promote the use of Irish.

Criteria: Support their school community in the language-planning process by contributing to the use and promotion of Irish in the school and local Gaeltacht community
(i) The school is engaged in the local language-planning process, which has the specific target of increasing the number of daily Irish speakers in the community.

For example:

- *The school has regular contact/meetings with the language-planning officer and there is ongoing collaboration to support the school's efforts in implementing relevant actions in the local language plan. The school is advised to nominate a person who will act as the point of contact for the language-planning officer.*
- *It is recommended that the school in collaboration with the language-planning officer agree a plan for the promotion of Irish for the new school year. Table 1 provides examples of activities which may be included in the plan to support a unified approach to implementation.*
- *Good links are fostered with the various local education sectors (early learning and care, primary and post-primary) to facilitate the transition of pupils from one level of schooling to the next.*
- *Appropriate attention is given to the relevant aspects of the transition programme (including pupil/student language profiles, number of fluent Irish speakers and the number of families in which Irish is spoken daily) to support the transition of children from the naíonra to the primary school and from the primary school to the post-primary school.*
- *The school supports activities that aim to encourage the speaking of Irish outside of and within the school.*
- *The school, with the support of the language-planning officer, shares relevant information with parents/guardians in relation to resources, services, events, learning opportunities etc. that are available through Irish in the local community.*

(ii) Representative(s) from the school are members of the local language-planning committee and/or are active in attempts to strengthen Irish as the language of the community in the area.

For example:

- *A representative from the school, the language-planning officer and/or a representative from the local lead language-planning organisation regularly attend meetings convened to support the promotion and strengthening of the use of Irish. To this end, relevant information is shared so that the school and the local lead language-planning organisation are aware of each other's work regarding the use and maintenance of Irish in the local Gaeltacht community.*

(iii) The school staff encourage the pupils to participate in the promotion of the language at school and in the community outside of the school.

For example:

- *The school supports the organisation of school events: historical or nature walks, visits to various heritage sites, a patron's day or a celebration of a local person/event.*
- *Under the guidance of the teacher, pupils play a key role in organising various Irish-language events, as appropriate, such as historical walks.*
- *Pupils are prepared for participation in Irish-language events: debating, drama, singing and writing competitions, for example, and literary and entrepreneurial festivals which aim to promote the Irish language (Oireachtas na Gaeilge and An Fhéile Scoildrámaíochta).*
- *Worthwhile links are maintained with language organisations such as Glór na nGael, Conradh na Gaeilge, Foras na Gaeilge, Tuismitheoirí na Gaeltachta, Muintearas, and pupils are made aware of relevant events managed by these organisations.*
- *Opportunities are provided for the children and their parents/guardians to share their opinions on the promotion of the Irish language with the local language-planning officer/language-planning committee so that they can be considered.*

(iv) There is worthwhile co-operation between the school, the community and the local lead language-planning organisation in implementing the educational elements of the local language plan and of the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme in the school.

For example:

- *The educational objectives of the local-language plan and the school's objectives to support the use of Irish are clearly integrated and aligned.*
- *The lead local language-planning organisation/LPO assists in a promotional campaign for parents/guardians to make them aware of the benefits and advantages of immersion education.*
- *The school co-operates with the local lead language-planning organisation/LPO to inform the school community of the availability of various local events to promote the Irish language.*
- *The school's progress in implementing the language-based criteria that underpin the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme is discussed on a whole-school basis*

annually and areas and targets for improvement relating to the promotion of Irish in the local Gaeltacht community are identified. A one-year programme to achieve this goal is agreed with the language-planning officer.

- *The school avails of the services provided by the lead language-planning organisation to support the use of Irish in the area.*

(v) There is co-operation between school staff and management and other youth organisations in the area, that provide services/events for the pupils of the school.

For example:

- *Links are created and developed between the school and language, cultural, sporting and entrepreneurial organisations in the area as appropriate (for example, Udarás na Gaeltachta, the local co-operative, Tuismitheoirí na Gaeltachta, Glór na nGael, Conradh na Gaeilge, the GAA, the local drama club, Muintearas, Youth Clubs, Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann and other local Irish language/cultural organisations).*
- *Pupils of the school, through their example, encourage sport/music organisations etc. to use Irish as a means of communication during their various events.*
- *School staff view extra-curricular activities as a very effective means of promoting the oral Irish and they avail of the opportunity to increase the number of Irish-language events in partnership with other organisations in the area that cater for young people.*

(vi) The pupils of the school regularly participate in Irish activities in the community.

For example:

- *The school choir/band is available for various community events and ceremonies.*
- *Pupils from the school participate in local sports clubs through the medium of Irish for girls and boys and maintain strong links with clubs such as the GAA, basketball clubs, athletics clubs and other sports clubs in the area.*

(vii) In so far as possible, pupils of the school present themselves in Irish at local/county/national level in any competitions in which they participate.

For example:

- *Pupils are proud of the Gaeltacht school ethos and their local dialect, which they demonstrate through their participation in local and national cultural events and activities.*
- *Pupils adhere to the Irish language rule of speaking Irish to each other during sporting events in school and outside of the school.*

(viii) Every effort is made to provide the school community (parents/guardians, pupils, fluent Irish speakers in the community, members of the board) with an opportunity to have an input into the promotion of Irish in the school.

For example:

- *Social events are organised in the school through the medium of Irish to give the community the opportunity to visit the school (for example, Christmas Concert, art exhibitions, concerts, religious events, open days).*
- *The school makes an effort, when possible, to perform concerts or talent shows through the medium of Irish for the school community.*
- *Pupils are encouraged to participate in Irish-language cultural festivals - music, dance, drama, storytelling - and in local and national competitions through the medium of Irish.*
- *Guest speakers with proficiency in Irish are invited to the school to share their experiences of work in various fields (such as business and enterprise, literature, the arts, social media and communications and sport). This will enable pupils to see Irish as relevant and important to people who are well-known in the world around them and this, in turn, will help motivate them to use the Irish language.*

Criteria: Prioritise the use of Irish in communicating with parents/guardians, the local community and other parties

(i) The school has a policy of prioritising the use of Irish with parents in every correspondence with them; that correspondence is prepared in Irish and an English translation is provided for those parents who need it. In the enrolment policy, as part of pupil/student registration process, parents are given the opportunity to request correspondence in Irish or bilingually.

For example:

- *The school co-operates with the language-planning officer to provide Irish-language class(es) for parents to help them to improve their own Irish in order to provide more effective support for their children to learn and enrich their language, thereby contributing to the use of Irish in the area.*
- *A conversation circle will be established in the school for parents/guardians to provide them with informal opportunities to use Irish, subject to demand.*
- *The school community is kept informed of matters relating to language-planning in the media, on the school's website and on social media.*
- *School newsletters are issued regularly through the medium of Irish.*
- *Priority is given to the Irish language in school notices.*

(ii) Meetings with parents are conducted through Irish only when possible or bilingually, if necessary, with priority given to Irish.

For example:

- *The use of Irish is promoted during parent/guardian meetings with teachers and at meetings of the parents' association.*

(iii) Irish is prioritised in any official correspondence with any local community/ state organisation with which the school is in contact.

For example:

- *Priority is given to the use of Irish in school correspondence in accordance with the ethos of a Gaeltacht school.*

(iv) The school maintains good relationships with parents/guardians by always providing clear and helpful proactive feedback in relation to their children's progress and the school works co-operatively with parents to support their children's progress and learning. Priority is given to the Irish language in these interactions.

For example:

Parents are informed of their children's participation in various school activities and are kept informed of their progress in all aspects of their schooling through the medium of Irish.

(v) Parents are encouraged to speak Irish with their children as frequently as possible, and especially in the school environment. Parents are reminded regularly that their children's progress in the language will be enhanced greatly if they receive a positive and encouraging example in relation to the use of Irish.

For example:

- *The school develops links with the local library to support parents in accessing a wider range of age-appropriate and attractive Irish-language books available for their children.*
- *The school has a parents' association that operates through the medium of Irish*
- *The parents' association has a role in the organisation of Irish language, cookery, arts etc. classes for other parents and for the school community and priority is given to the use and promotion of Irish during these events*
- *Parents/guardians are made aware of the language resources available to support them in using Irish in the home. They are provided with language resources, such as lists of terminology, that will assist them in supporting their children with homework. They are also provided with strategies to help encourage their children's interest in reading in Irish.*

Appendix 1

Child protection procedures for schools

Reminder for principals and school management authorities

The *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* (2017) require a board of management to prepare a Child Safeguarding Statement which includes a risk assessment.

The board is required to make a copy of the statement available to all school personnel, the patron and the parents' association, and also to publish the statement on the school website. They must provide a copy of the statement to parents if requested.

In Section 8.9 of the procedures, further information is provided on the requirements regarding the preparation and content of the Child Safeguarding Statement.

The Irish-language version of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* (2017) **and** related documents are available **HERE**. The English version of the documentation is available **HERE**.

Appendix 2

A resource to support Irish-medium and Gaeltacht schools

Beatha Teanga: An Ghaeilge - Teanga na Cumarsáide, an Spraioi agus an tSóisialaithe

- Gaeloideachas has published an electronic booklet to assist the whole-school community in their efforts to ensure that Irish is central in all interactions. The target groups are pupils, parents, the teaching staff, the support staff, the principal, the board of management, the parents' association and any other committees associated with the school.
- The aim of the booklet is to encourage positive attitudes and actions among Gaeltacht and school communities operating through the medium of Irish, which will contribute to the promotion of Irish as the language of communication, play and socialisation. It is acknowledged that schools in some Gaeltacht areas need to address particular sociolinguistic challenges. This booklet and the accompanying resources will be a support for schools implementing their action plans in order to fulfil the language-based criteria to gain recognition as a Gaeltacht school. The booklet and the additional support resource, including videos and podcasts from teachers and language-planning officers, are available **HERE**.



Appendix 3

Supports available to schools in Gaeltacht language-planning areas

The Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media has developed and is implementing a specific investment programme to provide further support for the Irish language in the following areas: The family (Tuismitheoirí na Gaeltachta); the early learning and care sector (Comhar Naíonraí na Gaeltachta); and traditional Irish-language arts (Ealaín na Gaeltachta).

These additional supports will enable the organisations referenced above to initiate and develop additional measures as a further support for language planning and for the implementation of the Policy on Gaeltacht Education. The following is a brief overview of what is intended:

1. Language Assistants' Scheme

In order to provide additional language acquisition and enrichment opportunities for young people in the Gaeltacht, and for the benefit of the Gaeltacht education system as a whole, the Department (DTCAGSM) supports the provision of language assistants for primary and post-primary schools in the Gaeltacht. The review of the Language Assistants Scheme was published in 2020. The review outlines ways in which the scheme could be further strengthened gradually and systematically - using the resources that are, and that will be, available.

2. Tuismitheoirí na Gaeltachta

Tuismitheoirí na Gaeltachta (TnaG), funded by RTCEGSM, has a special role to play in supporting families who are raising their children through Irish in the Gaeltacht or who wish to do so. A range of supports is available to schools from TnaG to strengthen and enrich Irish as a language of communication. Further information is available [HERE](#)

3. The Gaeltacht Arts

The Department (DTCAGSM) provides funding for Ealaín na Gaeltachta to extend provision for the arts through the medium of Irish in Gaeltacht areas.

4. Summer Camps' Scheme

Funding is provided to enable appropriate organisations to organise summer camps through the medium of Irish in the Gaeltacht for young people of the Gaeltacht. Muintearas, which operates under Údarás na Gaeltachta, is responsible for the administration of this scheme on behalf of the Department (DTCAGSM).

5. Sports and Fitness Activities

This provides funding for the provision of sporting activities through the medium of Irish in certain Gaeltacht schools. This is organised in conjunction with the Gaelic Athletic Association and Muintearas.

6. Community and Language Support Programme

In addition to the current assistance mentioned above, capital assistance is provided also under the Department's (DTCAGSM) Community and Language Supports Programme to further strengthen the Irish language infrastructure in the Gaeltacht. The projects identified under the programme include support provided in certain cases to assist Gaeltacht schools in refurbishing their facilities and purchasing equipment, to the benefit of the local community. In addition, assistance, in the form of equipment and refurbishment of accommodation, is provided under the programme to support the early learning and care sector in the Gaeltacht.

7. Details in relation to programmes and supports available in the Gaeltacht to promote the use of Irish

This is not an exhaustive list and can be added to as programmes emerge from year to year. It is also worth contacting the local language-planning officer in relation to specific projects that he/she may be able to organise in partnership with the school.

Programme	Organisation	Contact details
Techspás na Gaeilge Programme		https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/d1c4a-techspace-as-gaeilge/
JAI Companies' Programme: an enterprise programme for Transition Year students in Gaeltacht schools	Údarás na Gaeltachta	oiluint@udaras.ie
JAI 'Our World' Programme [This is aimed at senior classes in the primary school to encourage an interest in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics]	Údarás na Gaeltachta	oiluint@udaras.ie
Family supports and school literacy support schemes	Tuismitheoirí na Gaeltachta	www.tuismitheoiri.ie eolas@tuismitheoiri.ie
An Seó Bóthar	Conradh na Gaeilge	oige@cnag.ie
Future Leaders	Gaelic Athletic Association	https://learning.gaa.ie/ceannair%C3%ADdontodhcha%C3%AD
Marathonkids	Local Lead Language-planning Organisations	The Language-Planning Officer in your area
Language Assistants' Scheme	Muintearas and Oidhreacht Chorca Dhuibhne	Muintearas: muintearas@muintearas.com Oidhreacht Chorca Dhuibhne: eolas@cfcd.ie
Gaelic Athletics Programme	Munster Council and Connacht Council	Comhairle na Mumhan www.munstergaa.ie Comhairle Chonnachta clarnagcluichigaelacha@gmail.com
Fitness Programme	Muintearas Teo	cuntaslann@muintearas.com
Traditional Arts Classes	Ealaín na Gaeltachta	https://ealain.ie/
Summer Camps' Scheme	Muintearas Teo	muintearas@muintearas.com
Tús Maith Programme	Oidhreacht Chorca Dhuibhne	http://tusmaithocd.ie/ga/welcome-homepage-2/

Appendix 4

Language-based criteria and accompanying indicators of good practice: self-evaluating progress made

Language-based criteria and accompanying indicators of good practice	1	2	3	4
	No progress	Partial progress	Good progress	Very good progress
Criterion: Support the school community in the language-planning process by contributing to the use and maintenance of Irish in the school and local Gaeltacht community				
(i) The school is engaged in the local language-planning process, which has a clear target to increase the number of daily Irish speakers in the community.				
(ii) Representative(s) from the school are on the local language-planning committee and/or they are active in attempts to enhance Irish as the language of the community in the area.				
iii) The school staff encourage the pupils to participate in the promotion of the language at school and in the community outside of the school.				
(iv) There is worthwhile co-operation between the school and the local lead language-planning organisation in implementing the educational elements of the local language plan and of the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme in the school.				
(v) There is co-operation between school staff and management and other youth organisations in the area, that provide services/events for the pupils of the school.				
(vi) The pupils of the school regularly participate in Irish activities in the community.				
(vii) In so far as possible, pupils of the school present themselves through Irish at local/county/ national level in any competitions in which they participate.				
(viii) Every effort is made to provide the school community (parents/guardians, pupils, fluent Irish speakers in the community, members of the board) with an opportunity to have an input into the promotion of Irish in the school.				

Criterion: Prioritise the use of Irish in communicating with parents/guardians, the local community and other parties				
(i) The school has a policy of prioritising the use of Irish with parents in every correspondence with them; that correspondence is prepared in Irish and an English translation is provided for those parents who need it. In the enrolment policy, as part of the process of registering pupils, parents are given the opportunity to request correspondence in Irish or bilingually.				
(ii) Meetings with parents are conducted through Irish only when possible or bilingually, if necessary, with priority given to Irish.				
(iii) Irish is prioritised in any official correspondence with any local community/ state organisation with which the school is in contact.				
(iv) The school maintains good relationships with parents/guardians by always providing clear and helpful proactive feedback in relation to their children's progress and the school works co-operatively with parents to support their children's progress and learning. Priority is given to the Irish language in these interactions.				
(v) Parents are asked to make every effort to speak Irish at school (with teachers, other parents and children) when collecting their children. They are frequently reminded that their child's learning will be more successful if parents model this practice regarding the school's language of instruction.				