

Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme: Guidelines for ongoing implementation in primary schools March 2023

Information on the continued implementation of the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme in primary schools was outlined in [Circular 0010/2022](#), which issued last year. The circular applies to the implementation of the Scheme in both the 2022/23 and 2023/24 school years. This guidance note provides an update on the implementation of the Scheme for the 2023/24 school year.

School Clusters under the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme for 2023/24

As was detailed in [Circular 0010/2022](#), the Irish language support hours for the 2023/24 school year will be based on the school's enrolment on 30 September 2022. If schools wish to cluster their Irish language support hours to form posts for the 2023/24 school year, in accordance with the conditions laid out in the circular, they must complete an application form and submit it to aog@education.gov.ie by **9 May 2023**. The [School Cluster Application Form](#) can be downloaded from the gov.ie website.

The Gaeltacht Education Unit in the Department of Education can be contacted at aog@education.gov.ie with any queries regarding the clustering of Irish language support hours.

Travel expenses for teachers providing Irish language support hours in a clustered post under the Scheme

Teachers who are acting as support for Irish under the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme for the 2022/23 school year and who are in a cluster with more than one school can apply so that travel expenses are reimbursed to them. This is available to those teachers who are required to travel between schools in approved clusters under the Scheme to perform their teaching duties.

The [Travel Expenses Application Form](#) to apply for the reimbursement is available on gov.ie. Teachers should select 'Múinteoir Tacaíochta don Ghaeilge (Scéim Aitheantais Scoileanna Gaeltachta)' in the question regarding 'sonraí fostaíochta' when filling in the form. The form should be signed by the principal in the base school. Travel expenses are not payable to a teacher who has separate contracts to work part time hours in more than one school outside of an approved cluster arrangement.

Scanned copies may be sent to travelexpenses_primary@education.gov.ie or a hard copy can be sent to:

Primary Teachers Payroll
Travel Expenses
Department of Education
Cornamaddy
Athlone

Co. Westmeath
N37 X659.

[Circular 0009/2015](#) explains the procedures regarding the payment of travel expenses to eligible registered teachers employed as language support teachers and [further information](#) regarding these services can be found on the gov.ie website.

The arrangements regarding the above reimbursement of travel expenses will be reviewed at the end of the 2022/23 school year and a decision in relation to the arrangements for the 2023/24 school year will be made at that point.

Additional Irish language support hours in response to high numbers of new entrants

Similar to provisions made under NE-EAL, if the number of pupils in a school in the Scheme has increased significantly from 30 September of the previous school year due to an increase in new entrants, the school may be entitled to additional Irish language support hours based on the bands set out in [Circular 0010/2022](#). If pupil numbers now fall within a new band, the school may apply to aog@education.gov.ie to request these additional hours. This is being done on an exceptional basis for the 2022/23 and 2023/24 school years in response to the high incidence of new entrants being welcomed by schools.

Additional hours requested in the above exceptional circumstances cannot lead to any changes to current clusters or cannot be included in the formation of new clusters for the coming year. Schools are reminded that school clusters must be based on numbers as of 30 September 2022.

Schools must also ensure that new entrant pupil details are registered as required on the POD system.

Applications for additional Irish language support hours under these circumstances should be made on the [application form](#) available to download from gov.ie and submitted to aog@education.gov.ie.

Validation process for recognition as a Gaeltacht school

The process to validate the recognition of Gaeltacht schools under the terms of the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme commenced in October 2022. It is envisaged that this process will be completed during the 2023-2024 academic year. The validation process is overseen by the Gaeltacht Education Unit in conjunction with the Department's Inspectorate and with the support of An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG).

The validation process involves an inspection visit to evaluate each school's fulfilment of the language-based criteria for recognition as a Gaeltacht school. Details regarding the evaluation visit and other aspects of the validation process may

be found in the guidance note [Validation Process to Gain Recognition as a Gaeltacht School](#), which was published by the Department in June 2022.