



An Roinn Oideachais  
Department of Education

# **Educational Provision for Children from Ukraine, International Protection Applicants and Children with Recognised Status**

Guidance for Primary Schools  
September 2023

## Table of Contents

1	Why this guidance is being provided	3
2	How the Department supports educational provision for children from Ukraine, international protection applicants and children with recognised status	3
2.1	Regional education and language teams (REALT)	3
2.2	Teaching resources	3
2.3	Information and guidance	4
3	The pupils' sense of connection and belonging	4
3.1	Connection and belonging as elements of wellbeing	4
3.2	The pupils' sense of connection and belonging to their new school community	5
3.3	The pupils' sense of connection and belonging to their community of origin	5
3.4	Attendance	6
3.5	Partnership with parents/guardians	7
3.6	Pupils with special and additional educational needs	7
4	Placing the pupil with a view to progression	8
5	Support for the pupil's proficiency in the language of instruction	8
5.1	The importance of acquiring proficiency in the language of instruction	8
5.2	Effective practice in supporting learning of English as an additional language	9
6	Pupils who may be engaging with the Ukrainian curriculum outside of school hours	10
Appendix 1		11
	Summary of resources to which links are embedded in the text	11

## 1 Why this guidance is being provided

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for primary schools regarding educational provision for children who

- are beneficiaries of temporary protection following the Russian invasion of Ukraine
- are applicants for international protection (IP)
- have applied for or been granted refugee status, subsidiary protection or permission to remain in Ireland.

The term 'children from Ukraine, IP applicants and children with recognised status' is used throughout this guidance to refer to all of these groups, each of which has the same rights as Irish pupils regarding access to primary education in Ireland.

Schools have shown flexibility and creativity in adapting their practices to welcome these children and support their inclusion in school life. This guidance document for primary schools takes into account the ways in which schools' practice has evolved in response to the needs of these children. It restates and clarifies key principles informing provision and provides guidance on issues that pose particular challenges for schools. The Department of Education is committed to providing schools with the ongoing support and guidance that they need in order to continue this important work.

## 2 How the Department supports educational provision for children from Ukraine, international protection applicants and children with recognised status

### 2.1 Regional education and language teams (REALT)

Ireland responded to the unprecedented migration of families from Ukraine from early 2022 with a whole-of-government approach. As part of this approach, the Minister for Education, in conjunction with the education partners, established regional education and language teams (REALT) under the aegis of the education and training boards (ETBs). In each of the sixteen ETB areas, the REALT works to provide access to education for school-aged children and young people and to provide support both to their families and to the schools in which they are enrolled. REALTs also advise and support the Department in developing new capacity where required, and in co-ordinating the provision of education services to schools and families.

### 2.2 Teaching resources

#### **Special Education Teacher allocations**

Every school has a defined special education teaching (SET) allocation to support teaching and learning, based on the school's educational profile. This SET allocation is used by schools to provide additional support for children and young people who have identified

special educational needs (SEN), and those for whom English is an additional language (EAL). All schools may use a proportion of their existing SET allocation to address EAL needs.

#### **The New Entrants Allocation Scheme**

In 2022, when the enrolment of large numbers of children and young people from Ukraine commenced, the Department provided additional resources to schools to support them in meeting the needs of the children and young people arriving to Ireland from other countries. These resources comprised additional teaching hours based on the number of children and young people with EAL arriving in Ireland. This scheme is called the New Entrant Allocation Scheme (NEAS). To date, the Department has allocated 931 whole-time equivalent (WTE) posts under the scheme (674 in primary schools and 257 in post-primary schools).

#### **Additional Special Education Supports**

In 2022, the Department also provided additional temporary special education supports for schools enrolling children from Ukraine. This scheme was designed to ensure that the children and young people could continue their education in the most inclusive environment possible. The allocation of these supports is based on school enrolments and is adjusted approximately every six weeks to take account of changes in enrolments. At the end of the last school year, a total of 548 schools had received additional teaching hours under this scheme and 329 schools had received additional temporary special needs assistants (SNAs). Schools are expected to use these additional special education resources in line with the Continuum of Support and with their existing systems for identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people with special educational needs.

### **2.3 Information and guidance**

The Department of Education has published materials in a range of languages to support families in accessing the education system and to support early learning and care settings and schools in meeting their needs. The materials are on a dedicated section of the Government website, which is available [here](#).

## **3 The pupils' sense of connection and belonging**

### **3.1 Connection and belonging as elements of wellbeing**

Evidence shows that when children feel connected and have a sense of belonging, they are more likely to commit to and engage in school life. This improves educational outcomes and serves as a protective factor for mental health and wellbeing. Our experience of COVID-19 has led to a renewed sense of the importance of wellbeing. Schools have developed their policies and practices in this area in a way that enhances their capacity to support pupils' wellbeing.

The *Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice* identifies positive relationships with peers and teachers as being among the factors that protect pupils' wellbeing. Among

the factors that are identified as posing a risk to wellbeing are disengagement, absenteeism, isolation and alienation.

In August 2022, the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) published *Supporting the Wellbeing of Children from Ukraine in your School: Guidance for Primary Schools*. This document, which is available [here](#), provides evidence-based strategies and resources for schools. It is based on research evidence that if children feel a sense of belonging and connection to their new school, they will do better in the long term.

### **3.2 The pupils' sense of connection and belonging to their new school community**

Schools can support the pupil's sense of connection and belonging to their new school community in a range of ways, including the following:

- Integrating pupils into the appropriate mainstream classes and avoiding arrangements that result in the segregation of newly arrived pupils
- Assigning key adults and volunteer pupils who will check in regularly on each newly-enrolled pupil and from whom the pupil may seek help when needed
- Gathering information about the interests of individual pupils and sharing this information with others in their peer group where relevant
- Including all pupils in social and extra-curricular activities
- Providing opportunities for all pupils to participate in the school's pupil council
- Providing opportunities for children from Ukraine, IP applicants and children with recognised status to avail of a summer programme, where available
- Ensuring that staff members are familiar with the strategies and resources in *Supporting the Wellbeing of Children from Ukraine in your School: Guidance for Primary Schools*
- Including support for wellbeing of children from Ukraine, IP applicants and children with recognised status among the context-specific school priorities for review and development in school self-evaluation (SSE) for the period 2023-2026
- Including support for wellbeing of children from Ukraine, IP applicants and children with recognised status in the wellbeing promotion review and development cycle to be initiated by 2025.

Advice offered by REALT and school networking can enhance the successful inclusion of pupils into the school setting. Contact details for REALT teams are available [here](#). A list of Education Support Centres is available [here](#).

### **3.3 The pupils' sense of connection and belonging to their community of origin**

As well as prioritising the inclusion of pupils and their families in the school community, schools should also take opportunities to support pupils' identification with the heritage and

culture of their place of origin. Initiatives for the school to consider in supporting the pupils' sense of connection and belonging to their community of origin include the following:

- Promoting appreciation of the cultural heritage of children from Ukraine, IP applicants and children with recognised status among the wider school population
- Viewing the pupils' competence in their home language as a key strength that helps scaffold the acquisition of new knowledge and skills, the language of schooling and other new languages. For example, children and young people are often already bilingual before arriving in Ireland. This can be highlighted with them and their families as a key skill that will support them in acquiring the languages of schooling (English / Irish) as well as other European languages.

A wide range of resources for schools on inclusion, diversity, intercultural education and related matters has been prepared by DE support services and other agencies. These are available on the Scoilnet website [here](#). *Intercultural Education in the Post-Primary School*, published by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) is available [here](#).

Post-Primary Languages Ireland (PPLI) has a school library funding scheme to support both primary and post-primary schools in providing books and other relevant home-language resources for pupils whose home language is not the language of instruction in the school. Dual-language books, which are available for different age groups, are particularly useful. Further information on the *School Library Funding Scheme* is available [here](#)

### 3.4 Attendance

Attendance at school can be a significant factor in supporting the integration of children from Ukraine, IP applicants and children with recognised status, and their families, with their local community. These pupils are particularly vulnerable to the risks associated with poor attendance. This is highlighted in a report published by the United Nations High Council for Refugees (UNHCR), which is available [here](#).

In order to experience a sense of connection with their peers, to learn and enjoy other advantages of school life, once enrolled in a school, pupils must attend school every day for the full school day.

All schools are required to have an attendance strategy, the purpose of which is to promote maximum attendance and engagement by all pupils. The school's attendance strategy should be shared with and explained to all pupils and their parents/guardians. Effective school practice in promoting and supporting good school attendance among children from Ukraine, IP applicants and children with recognised status includes the following:

- Building effective partnerships with parents/guardians and communicating high expectations for school attendance
- Keeping information on the Department's online system, POD, up to date
- Ensuring that teaching and learning are engaging and relevant to the needs and ambitions of pupils and developing positive initiatives to promote attendance
- Following the graded steps in the school's attendance policy to address non-attendance including liaison with Tusla Education Support Service
- Consideration of issues relating to accommodation and transport that may have an impact on pupil attendance in consultation with REALT

### 3.5 Partnership with parents/guardians

When pupils see positive engagement between their home and school, it supports their sense of connection and belonging to the school community. Schools should begin to build positive, affirming relationships with parents/guardians at the earliest opportunity. It is important that schools:

- Identify the languages spoken by the pupil and their family
- Establish a learning profile for the pupil, including details of prior experience of schooling, and learning strengths and needs (including any special educational needs)
- Communicate the school's expectations with regard to attendance and engagement with the Irish curriculum
- Provide information, or links to information, on the progression pathways open to the pupil in the Irish education system, such as that provided [here](#)
- Provide parents/guardians with information regarding any capacity that the school has to facilitate pupils in pursuing elements of the Ukrainian curriculum within the school
- Establish a link between the family and the school's Parents' Association

Schools should ensure that parents/guardians have opportunities to contact school personnel when they have a concern and are facilitated to participate in all relevant school functions. Schools with a significant number of children from Ukraine, IP applicants and children with recognised status should seek to involve at least one parent/guardian from this group in the parents' association.

### 3.6 Pupils with special and additional educational needs

Where children from Ukraine, IP applicants and children with recognised status have additional and/or special educational needs other than language needs, the provision of additional support should be informed by principles of inclusive education, as set out in the Department of Education's *Guidelines for Primary Schools: Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools*, which is available [here](#). Supports provided to

these pupils should be based on identified needs and informed by regular reviews of progress (in consultation with parents and pupils) as outlined in *A Continuum of Support for Primary Schools: Guidelines for Teachers*, which is available [here](#). Communication with representatives of NEPS and the National Council for Special Education on the local REALT team may support this process.

## 4 Placing the pupil with a view to progression

Placing pupils in the most appropriate class is a key priority in supporting wellbeing, identity and belonging, as well as educational progression and outcomes. Schools' practice in placement of pupils should include the following:

- Placing the pupil in the same mainstream class as their age-peers
- Ensuring that children from Ukraine, IP applicants and children with recognised status have access to all aspects of the Irish curriculum along with their peers in the year group (in English-medium schools this should include Gaeilge unless the pupil has been granted an exemption in accordance with Department of Education Circular [0054/2022](#))
- Considering all available results of assessments completed by the pupil, including those relating to special educational needs
- Advising senior pupils and their parents/guardians regarding progression to post-primary education in the Irish education system

## 5 Support for the pupil's proficiency in the language of instruction

### 5.1 The importance of acquiring proficiency in the language of instruction

Acquiring sufficient proficiency in the language of instruction of the school is a key challenge for many children. Schools may be able to provide support from within their existing teaching allocation. In circumstances where a school does not have any capacity within its existing allocation, an application for EAL supports can be made to the Department using the relevant form, which is available [here](#).

Planning for language support should consider pupils' learning needs in two distinct aspects of language.



### **Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS)**

This is the language required for everyday social interactions. Children typically acquire these skills through immersion in the language of the school. Placement in mainstream classrooms and frequent interaction with peers who are fluent speakers of the target language are an important factor in developing BICS.

### **Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)**

This refers to the language required to understand and discuss lesson content and to achieve progression in learning. Its development requires teachers' practice to include the direct teaching of relevant terminology and ongoing support for pupils in the use of this language. The development of CALP typically takes longer than the development of BICS.

## **5.2 Effective practice in supporting learning of English as an additional language**

The *Primary Language Curriculum* views linguistic diversity in the classroom as a support factor in the teaching and learning of any language. The curriculum emphasises that much language learning is transferable from one language to others. In order to support effective teaching and learning of English as an additional language, the school's practice should include the following:

- Ensuring that the communicative and play-based methodologies that are central to the *Primary School Curriculum* are part of teachers' practice in all settings
- Encouraging children to explore similarities and differences between languages
- Assessing and setting targets for pupils with EAL in reading, writing, speaking and listening, by using the Primary School Assessment Kit and related resources and guidelines, all of which are available [here](#)
- Sharing language targets with the pupil, their parents/guardians and relevant teachers
- Promoting and supporting teachers' practice in mainstream and other settings to support pupils' learning and progression in language acquisition
- Maintaining a language-support file for each EAL pupil that clearly records the pupil's current level, the targets for improvement and planned interventions
- Supporting teachers in making every lesson a language lesson, in which the language that the pupil requires to demonstrate their learning in the subject is taught explicitly, using strategies such as those suggested [here](#)
- Teaching the skills of autonomous language learning, including the use of dictionaries and digital applications
- Providing regular opportunities for pupils with EAL to speak independently during lessons and to engage in peer work with pupils with English as their first language
- Acknowledging that pupils may have an ongoing need to use their home language on occasion for communicative and academic purposes
- Providing pupils with formative feedback to support improvement

- Deploying the EAL teacher in mainstream settings as appropriate
- Using time in support settings to reinforce language and concepts taught in the mainstream classrooms

## 6 Pupils who may be engaging with the Ukrainian curriculum outside of school hours<sup>7</sup>

An order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine in May 2023 has stated that Ukrainian pupils attending school in an EU Member State are not required to have engaged with online Ukrainian education as a prerequisite for continuing their education in Ukraine at an age-appropriate grade after their return. This is noted in a document jointly agreed by the EU and Ukraine, which is available [here](#). Schools should bring this to the attention of Ukrainian pupils and their families.

In some schools, however, there may be pupils who engage with the Ukrainian curriculum prior to attending school in the morning or after school finishes in the evening. In supporting these pupils, effective practice by schools would include the following:

- Establishing the extent of pupils' engagement with other curricula outside of the Irish school day
- Discussing the challenges involved with pupils and their parents/guardians
- Being attentive to the effect of the dual workload on the wellbeing of the pupil.

---

<sup>7</sup> Where parents/ guardians express a preference not to enrol their children in a school with the intention of them engaging exclusively with the online and distance learning offerings from Ukraine parents/ guardians must apply to the Child & Family Agency TUSLA to have their child placed on the register of children educated outside of a recognised schools. Details of the application process can be found at <https://www.tusla.ie/services/family-community-support/alternative-education-assessment-and-registration-service/>

## Appendix 1

### Summary of resources to which links are embedded in the text

Information provided by the Department of Education for schools on provision for pupils from Ukraine

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/48639-information-for-schools-ukraine/>

*Supporting the Wellbeing of Young People from Ukraine in your School: Guidance for Post-Primary Schools* (NEPS, August 2022)

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/61206-supporting-the-wellbeing-of-children-from-ukraine-in-your-school/>

Information on Regional Education and Language Teams for Ukraine

<https://www.etbi.ie/regional-education-and-language-teams-for-ukraine/>

Contact details for the network of Education Support Centres

<https://www.esci.ie/education-centres.html>

Cultural and linguistic supports available on Scoilnet

<https://www.scoilnet.ie/go-to-primary/clsupports/>

Intercultural Education in the Post-Primary School: Guidance for Schools (NCCA, 2006)

[https://ncca.ie/media/1903/intercultural\\_education\\_in\\_the\\_primary\\_school\\_guidelines\\_for\\_schools.pdf](https://ncca.ie/media/1903/intercultural_education_in_the_primary_school_guidelines_for_schools.pdf)

Information on the school library funding scheme

<https://languagesconnect.ie/school-library-funding-scheme-2022/>

*Stepping Up: Refugee Education in Crisis* (UNHCR, 2019)

<https://www.unhcr.org/steppingup/wp-content/uploads/sites/76/2019/09/Education-Report-2019-Final-web-9.pdf>

*Guide to the Irish Education System: Guide for Parents*

<https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/04e0c8-parents-guide-to-the-irish-education-system/>

*Guidelines for Primary Schools Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools* (Department of Education, 2017)

<https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/86911/e2ab0e65-f360-45a4-8075-37a4123838c3.pdf#page=null>

Guidelines and resource packs regarding the Continuum-of-Support framework

<https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/dca316-special-education-needs-a-continuum-of-support/>

Applications for EAL supports

<https://www.gov.ie/en/service/746720-allocation-of-teachers-to-schools/#primary>

*Primary School Assessment Kit* (NCCA) and associated resources

<https://ncca.ie/en/primary/primary-developments/language/english-as-an-additional-language-in-primary-schools/>

Effective teaching strategies for EAL learners (PDST)

<https://www.pdst.ie/primary/literacy/EAL>

Arrangement for Co-operation on Education between the European Commission and the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine

[https://eu-solidarity-ukraine.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-06/Arrangement%20for%20cooperation%20Education\\_EN.pdf](https://eu-solidarity-ukraine.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-06/Arrangement%20for%20cooperation%20Education_EN.pdf)