

Where can I get more information?

Website: www.schooldigitalchampion.gov.ie

Email: schooldigitalchampion@decc.gov.ie

Phone: Paula Gormley (01) 678 2025

Write to: School Digital Champion Project Office
Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications,
Elm House, Earlsvale Road,
Cavan H12 A8H7.

All correspondence must be submitted by email from the teacher leading the team.



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The School Digital Champion Programme

As part of the National Digital Strategy the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, in collaboration with Department of Education, has developed the School Digital Champion Programme. The Programme aims to promote digital adoption and encourage the productive use of technology by students.

We invite your school and students to complete a project showing how technology can be used to find a solution to day to day problems. In selecting a project for 2020/2021 students are being asked to consider how they could use their skills and technology to reduce waste, help combat climate change, improve energy efficiency, promote digital inclusion, find solutions to problems encountered during the Covid-19 pandemic, develop tutorials for blended learning, promote online safety and wellbeing.

Online training workshops and other exciting opportunities for students and teachers will be provided as part of the Programme.

You must submit your completed online application form by 5pm on Friday 27 November 2020

The 2019/2020 Programme

The School Digital Champion Programme was launched as part of the National Digital Strategy to promote digital adoption and encourage the productive use of technology by students. During the 2019/2020 programme, teachers and students were provided with training which included workshops on video editing, web design, coding and App design, as well as on communications and presentation skills. It also included workshops on coding with microbits and an introduction to infographics. The training days took place in Dublin, Limerick and Sligo and were supported by, PDST, LERD and Google.

In February 2020 over 200 students attended site visits to Facebook and Microsoft. While in previous years, teachers and students have also availed of the opportunity to visit a number of our other partners, including Samsung, RTÉ, Google, Twitter, Kuka Robotics and Eirgrid where they took part in very exciting and informative programmes including:

- mobile journalism training session
- creative ideation
- virtual reality experience
- innovation workshops
- career talks

What are the benefits of taking part in the School Digital Champion Programme?

Schools

This is a unique opportunity for your students to become involved in an exciting and innovative programme that has the potential to involve learning at many levels.

The programme will:

- recognise those students who are innovative in the use of new technologies
- maximise the possibilities for students to become involved in their community
- lead learning through the use of new technologies and
- enable your students to make a real difference through the use of technology.

Students

Training

The Programme will give students the opportunity to avail of online training which will provide workshops tailored to meet the needs identified in the School Digital Champion Application Form.

Students will get an opportunity to improve key skills, including:

- critical-thinking
- innovation
- communications
- creativity and
- team-working

Site visits

The opportunity to visit leading technology companies will be restricted this year due to Covid-19 public health measures and guidance. The Departments are working with these companies with a view to providing online support and career guidance advice to all School Digital Champions.

Prize-winning opportunities

While the programme is not a competition there will be opportunities for the champions to win prizes for their schools throughout the year.

Showcase projects

The Programme includes an opportunity to showcase all completed projects at a special event in May 2021. This event may be held virtually and will be subject to Covid-19 public health guidelines.

Teachers

Training

Teachers will be given the opportunity to participate in the training workshops. In as far as possible course content will be based on the needs identified in your School Digital Champion Application Form. Further details on the training will issue by email to the lead teacher.

How do schools take part in the programme?

Your school should select a team of up to 4 students to act as leaders or role models in the development of a project which uses technology to make a difference to your:

- School - Home
- the wider community or
- local business

These 4 students will be known as the School Digital Champions. If your school has a second project proposal, you may select a second team of 4 students.

For the 2020/2021 programme we welcome full class participation in the project development with the 4 School Digital Champions leading the project.

What are the project themes?

School Digital Champions, can develop a project from one of the following 3 themes.

Theme 1: School - Home

Nine out of ten jobs require digital skills. Employers are placing increasing value on skills such as:

- problem-solving
- communications
- critical thinking
- team working

It is more important now than ever before that learning becomes something that happens inside and outside of the school.

How can you, as School Digital Champion, find ways of using digital technology to support learning in school and beyond the walls of the classroom?

Theme 2: Local Community

The internet is having a big impact on Irish society especially now in the Covid-19 era. For those who are 'connected', the range of communications, entertainment, information and learning resources available is much greater than for those who remain excluded from the digital world.

How can you, as School Digital Champion, support your local community and its citizens to make best use of digital technology?

Theme 3: Local Entrepreneurship

Now more than ever Irish businesses need to embrace e-commerce and engage with customers digitally.

How can you, as School Digital Champion, help your local small businesses to sell online and connect with their customers?

In line with the above themes when selecting a project for 2020/2021 students are asked to consider how they could use their skills and technology to reduce waste, help combat climate change, improve energy efficiency, promote digital inclusion, find solutions to problems encountered during the Covid-19 pandemic, develop tutorials for blended learning, promote online safety and wellbeing.

Is this a competition?

No. The focus of the programme is on active participation rather than a competitive endeavour. However, champions will be provided with opportunities to win prizes for their schools. A number of teachers who have previously participated stated that this resulted in a more inclusive programme and provided for all levels of IT skills. They also found that it motivated and inspired students to share knowledge and collaborate with each other. Moreover, it introduced them to career opportunities in the digital arena.

What is the application process?

Your Principal will have received a letter from Minister's Eamon Ryan and Norma Foley inviting your school to participate in the Programme.

You will find further information about the programme at www.schooldigitalchampion.gov.ie. Should you have any queries about the application process please contact the project office at schooldigitalchampion@dcae.gov.ie.

Step 1. Register your interest in the programme

Send an email to schooldigitalchampion@decc.gov.ie expressing your school's interest in the competition. The email should be sent by the lead teacher who will receive all communications from the project office. Closing date for registering your interest is Thursday 5th November 2020.

Step 2. Your school selects a team of Champions

A team can be made up of a maximum of 4 students. These students will take the lead on the project; however, the rest of the class can get involved. It may work well to choose a team with a mix of digital knowledge and technical experience, as well as a range of organisational skills.

The team of School Digital Champions must obtain parental consent. Parental Consent Forms are available to download at www.schooldigitalchampion.gov.ie

Step 3. Agree the project

When you have selected your team of Champions, the next step is to collaborate and agree on the digital project to be pursued by your school. Projects must be original and should make a difference within the school, local community or a local business.

Step 4. Complete School Digital Champion Application Form

You can complete the School Digital Champion Application Form online at: www.schooldigitalchampion.gov.ie

Please complete this form in full and ensure that it is approved by your School Principal.

You must complete your online Application Form before 5pm on Friday 27 November 2020

Step 5. Return the School Digital Champion Parental Consent Forms to us

The school should email schooldigitalchampion@decc.gov.ie a copy of the signed Parental Consent Form for each of the students selected to be a School Digital Champion on or before 27 November 2020.

We will contact you if further information is required on any aspect of your application.

When should your project be completed?

Your project must be completed by 15 April 2021.

As part of the project, students must complete a project report describing the project, defining its rationale, aims, process and outcomes. The report should be sent to us by email at schooldigitalchampion@decc.gov.ie by 15 April 2021.

You can see further guidelines on information to be included in the report at www.schooldigitalchampion.gov.ie.

You must complete your project and project report by 15 April 2021.

What is the timeline?

November 2020

- 5 November – Closing date for Expressions of Interest
- 27 November – School to submit the completed online School Digital Champion Application Form
- 27 November – School to submit a copy of signed parental consent form for each School Digital Champion to schooldigitalchampion@decc.gov.ie

January 2021

- Skills training workshops, will be provided for teachers and students

February/March 2021

- Virtual site visits to partners may be organised for School Digital Champions and their teachers who are actively participating in the programme
- Submit a short progress report on your project.

April 2021

- **15 April** – closing date for completion of all projects. Completed Project Report should be submitted by email to schooldigitalchampion@decc.gov.ie

May 2021

- Completed projects will be showcased at a national virtual event.
 - School Digital Champions will receive their Certificates of Participation.
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