
Ministers Foley and Madigan announce €40 million summer programme for pupils with complex special educational needs and those at greatest risk of educational disadvantage

From [Department of Education](#)

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Minister for Education Norma Foley and Minister of State with responsibility for Special Education Josepha Madigan today, Tuesday 3 May, announced a summer education programme for pupils with complex special educational needs and those at greatest risk of educational disadvantage for summer 2022.

Building on the successful 2021 programme, all schools (primary and post-primary) will once again be encouraged to provide summer programmes including post-primary children with complex needs and children at risk of educational disadvantage.

The Inclusion Programme also offers an opportunity for schools to address the needs of migrant students such as addressing English language skills and integration, including students who have recently arrived in Ireland from Ukraine.

The programme's aims are to support pupils to re-engage with education, to build their confidence and increase their motivation, promote wellbeing and for some who are at key transition stages, help to ensure they can move on to their planned educational placement next September along with their peers.

Up to €40 million is available to fund the programme in line with that available in 2021 and is seen as a measure relating to the continued impact of COVID-19 on schools and families during the 2021/22 school year.

Today's announcement marks a recognition of the value of such school-based programmes for children with complex needs and those at risk of educational disadvantage in all schools.

A key objective of this year's scheme is to increase the number of schools offering the summer programme to their students. Steps have been taken to afford schools as much flexibility as possible, and to ease administrative requirements. This year there is provision to recruit newly qualified teachers graduating this summer as well as undergraduate student teachers who have registered with the Teaching Council under Route 5.

Minister Foley said:

"I am very pleased with this important government decision, to continue with an enhanced summer programme for 2022 as a response to the impact of the pandemic, and offer important education provision this summer to children who really need it.

"We are all acutely conscious that children and young people have had an extended period of disruption to their education. The disruption has had many adverse consequences for the lives and wellbeing of many children. Evidence indicates that it particularly impacts children with complex special educational needs and those at greatest risk of educational disadvantage.

"The summer 2021 programme was extremely successful. I saw first-hand the power of the programme to enhance, enrich and support students growth and learning through a myriad of inventive and creative plans.

"School teams, led by enthusiastic and committed staff provided imaginative, creative and fun learning experiences for children, which focused on aspects of social development, wellbeing, functional and life skills, literacy, numeracy and digital skills.

"I encourage school communities to take full advantage of this opportunity and to provide this valuable programme to their students.

"We have also listened to concerns of school stakeholders as to the challenges in running summer programmes and have taken significant steps to enhance supports for schools. The overseer and preparation roles permit principals to delegate these functions to other members of staff. Both of these roles provide exciting personal opportunities for staff to develop their leadership skills and experience with recognition at a whole-school level.

"Across the country, our children and young people with complex needs, or at risk of educational disadvantage will benefit hugely from today's decision, and I hope the numbers of schools involved will grow so that more children can benefit."

A home-based summer programme will continue to be available for children with complex needs where their schools are not providing a school based programme.

Minister Madigan said:

“This is a particularly important announcement for young people with additional needs and young people facing educational disadvantage. Every student with complex needs across all primary and post-primary schools is eligible to take part. This is a programme I believe in and have pursued strongly. I welcome the decision to make this expanded programme a reality.

“We know it has been a very difficult time for students with additional needs who have had their education and engagement with school disrupted over the last 2 years. Parents and families have been rightly worried about the impact it has had on their child’s educational development and loss of key skills.

“Last summer I saw at first hand in numerous schools the positive benefits that this programme brings to a wide range of students with additional needs. Last year’s programme’s eligibility was expanded to allow all students in special schools, special classes, and those with complex needs in mainstream schools to participate. I urge all schools to participate if possible, to mitigate the risk of regression and disengagement for children with complex needs.

“The summer programme is an critical scheme of special education provision in Ireland. This programme and the funding that goes with it, demonstrates the commitment of the government to backing special education and ensuring that every student gets the support they need.”

The 5 key strands of the programme will run, as follows:

- numeracy and literacy camps in DEIS primary schools
- school-based summer programme in primary schools with special classes and special schools
- home-based provision for children with complex needs where no school-based programme is available
- all primary schools (DEIS and non DEIS) have the opportunity to provide a 2-week summer programme for mainstream pupils with complex needs and those at greatest risk of educational disadvantage
- all post-primary schools (DEIS and non DEIS) have the opportunity to provide a 2-week summer programme for mainstream students with complex needs and those at greatest risk of educational disadvantage

The Inclusion Programme for primary and post-primary schools remains for 2022 and the DEIS Numeracy and Literacy Camps will continue to be available to all DEIS primary schools.

Enhanced measures have been put in place to encourage participation of schools in this process, including reducing the administrative process, provision of funding to schools towards preparation including enhanced funding for special schools and classes. Other measures include earlier payment of school staff and tutors, provision to recruit final year student teachers and student teachers registered with the Teaching Council under Route 5.

Overseeing and preparation roles will continue to support school principals and distributed leadership functions if required.

Further details on the schemes and how schools can apply will be made available over the coming period at www.gov.ie/summerprogramme. Specific information will be provided to schools for parents, and distributed directly through social media and relevant organisations.

Pupils with complex needs who have transport provided on the Special Educational Needs School Transport Scheme during the school year and are attending the school-based programme in either a primary or a special school will be provided with transport.

Notes

Summer provision programmes

The continuation of the enhanced summer provision programmes for 2022 is a response measure due to impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education.

Prior to last year's expansion, summer programmes were only available to special schools and pupils in special classes in primary schools and in DEIS schools.

Further details on the schemes and how schools can apply will be made available over the coming period at www.gov.ie/summerprogramme.

Recruitment of graduate teachers and undergraduate student teachers

Schools can engage substitute teachers and SNAs from outside of their school if the staff normally employed by the school are not available. The

Teaching Council and the Irish Primary Principal's Network (IPPN) will promote the summer programmes with this year's graduate teachers and undergraduate students registered under Route 5 to increase the supply of available teachers this summer via <https://www.educationposts.ie/>.

Graduate teachers and PME student teachers can work on the summer programme where they have commenced their registration process with the Teaching Council. Undergraduate student teachers can work on the summer programme who are:

- currently in Year 3 of a 4-year undergraduate teacher education programme or;
- currently in Year 3 or Year 4 of a 5-year undergraduate teacher education programme

and have commenced their registration process with the Teaching Council where the following conditions are fulfilled:

1. Garda vetting has been completed as part of their application for registration with the Teaching Council.
2. Their registration with the Council under Route 5 – Student Teachers will be fulfilled by 7 October 2022.

A student teacher registered with the Teaching Council under Route 5 can be engaged by primary or post-primary schools.