



An Roinn Oideachais  
Department of Education

# **2023 Summer Programme ‘Building Confidence and Connections’**

## **Post-Primary Schools**

### Overview – Terms and Conditions

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# Background

## Summer Programme 2023

This year's Summer Programme is building upon the 2021 and 2022 programmes. The main priority in 2023 Summer Programme is to ensure students with the most complex special educational needs should have access to a school based summer programme. This year's programme was designed and developed to ensure supports are targeted to assist students with complex special educational needs.

The programme's aims are to support students' wellbeing through building their confidence and enhancing their sense of connection with their school and their peers. It also strives to support children and young people who are at key transition stages in their education to progress to their planned educational placement in September.

The COVID-19 pandemic and associated disruption to education has had adverse consequences for many children and their families. The effect on children with special educational needs and those at greatest risk of educational disadvantage has been greater. The interruption of the regular school routine, social interaction with friends and other school supports presented a risk of regression in the learning, social and emotional development and wellbeing of these children.

The Department of Education encourages all recognised schools to run the initiative during the school summer holidays at a time that is suitable for staff and students.

The Department of Education is seeking the involvement of all post-primary schools in the provision of the 2023 Summer Programme.

*Note:* school refers only to a school as recognised under Section 10 (3) of the Education Act 1998.

## Theme for Summer Programme 2023

The theme for this year's programme is 'Building Confidence and Connections'.

The Summer Programme is intended to be an enjoyable experience for both students and staff. The range of activities should reflect this year's theme and include opportunities for pupil-centred, play-based engagement. This can help schools transfer the focus away from any feelings of distress and allow students to enjoy the present moment and to look forward with optimism by 'Building Confidence and Connections'.

Each school's Summer Programme Organiser will be required to attend online training which will be facilitated by Tralee Education Support Centre. A collaborative forum will be provided to support Organisers to share experience and expertise will also be provided.

Supports, guidance and training material will be provided to schools and staff to help develop and deliver this year's programme

## What's new for 2023

This year's programme also introduces a new **Organiser role**, replacing preparation hours in previous years, to help support schools in their planning and participation in the Summer Programme. Also, the title of the Overseer role is changing to **Summer Programme Manager** role and the functions for this role remain largely the same as previous years. Further details in relation to these roles are provided in [Section 3](#) of this document.

Other resources and measures are provided in sections below.

## Support for schools to offer the programme.

A broad suite of supports has been put in place to encourage and facilitate schools to offer the programme. These measures are designed to provide flexibility and to assist management in relation to administrative tasks. The supports also include the earlier payment of school staff through ESINET and the provision of funding to schools to facilitate preparation, co-ordination and supervision of the programmes. Further details in relation to the ESINET payment process are available in [Section 5](#) of this document.

With regard to staffing, newly qualified teachers and undergraduate student teachers who have registered with the Teaching Council under Route 5 are eligible to be employed on the Summer Programme. It is also open to schools to recruit appropriately-qualified staff for the role of SNA. Further details in relation to staffing are available in [Section 3](#) of this document.

While some principals may wish to continue with organising and running the programme in their schools, similar to previous years, the 2023 Summer Programme permits principals to delegate these functions to other members of staff.

The new **Organiser** role is being introduced so that boards of management and school principals can assign responsibilities for programme planning and preparation at a much

earlier stage in their school year. There is also a **Summer Programme Manager** role during the summer months when the programme is running in the school. Principals are encouraged to engage with staff members to take on these responsibilities to ease their own workload and to promote distributed leadership.

The Organiser and Summer Programme Manager roles provide an exciting professional opportunity for teachers to develop their leadership skills and to gain management experience both at a whole-school and career development level. These roles will be outlined in more detail in [Section 3](#) of this document.

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# 1. Post-Primary School Scheme

## Student eligibility

The Post-Primary School Scheme is open to pupils enrolled in special classes, pupils who have complex special educational needs in mainstream classes and those who are most at risk of educational disadvantage.

Post-primary schools with special classes running a Post-Primary School Scheme should prioritise pupils in special classes when assigning places for their programme. All pupils attending special classes are eligible to participate in their school's summer programme.

Subsequent places can then be given to pupils with complex special educational needs in mainstream classes with the remaining places on the programme being offered to those at most risk of educational disadvantage.

In mainstream schools without special classes, the school-based programme will support pupils in groups of up to twelve children. In deciding eligibility for the programme, priority should be given to pupils with complex special educational needs in mainstream classes with the remaining places on the programme being offered to those at most risk of educational disadvantage.

For the purposes of the Post-Primary School Scheme, students with complex special educational needs in mainstream classes are defined as:

1. All students enrolled in special classes.
2. Students presenting with the most significant needs in mainstream classes in post-primary schools who are accessing the highest level of the Continuum of Support (School Support Plus)<sup>1</sup>. This will include a small number of students with enduring needs which significantly affect their capacity to learn, to function independently and to participate in education.

These students require highly individualised and differentiated learning programmes that are significantly different to their peers. These students may present with the following:

- Significant needs with physical and/or sensory functioning (including students who are Deaf or have severe to profound hearing loss and students who are blind or have a severe to profound visual impairment)
- Significant needs in cognitive functioning and independence/daily living skills (including students who have moderate to severe OR significant/profound learning disability)

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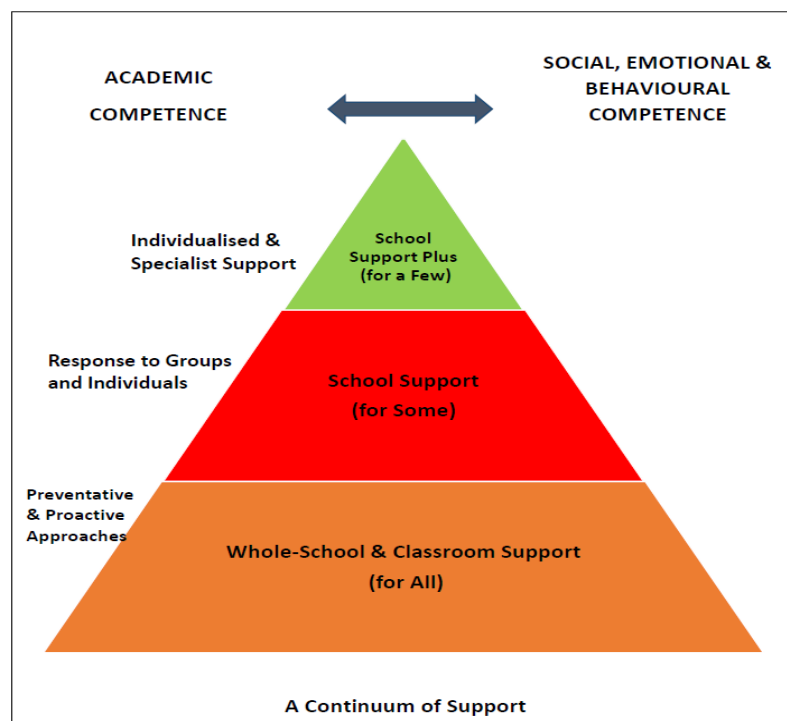
<sup>1</sup> See Guidelines for Post-primary Schools Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools for guidance in identifying and responding to pupils' needs as part of the Continuum of Support, which gives worked examples

• <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/56c43-supporting-pupils-and-students-with-special-educational-needs-guidelines-for-schools/>

- Significant needs in social communication, social interaction combined with rigid repetitive patterns of behaviour
- Autistic Students
- Students with Down syndrome
- Students with severe OR significant emotional behavioural needs to the extent that these behaviours of concern are impacting on a student's ability to learn, to function independently and to participate fully in school life.

### ***Continuum of Support Note:-***

The Department has set out the Continuum of Support framework ([available here](#)) to assist schools in identifying and responding to students' needs. This framework recognises that special educational needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, and from transient to long term, and that students require different levels of support depending on their identified needs. The Continuum of Support is a problem-solving model of assessment and intervention that enables schools to gather and analyse data, as well as to plan and review the progress of individual students. Using this framework helps to ensure that interventions are incremental, moving from class-based interventions to more intensive and individualised support, and that they are informed by careful monitoring of progress. The Department's Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools ([available here](#)) provide guidance for schools in identifying and responding to students' needs as part of the Continuum of Support framework.





The following is a guide to assist schools in selecting students for the remaining places following the allocation to students with complex special educational needs in mainstream classes:

**This list is not exhaustive but is intended as a guideline.**

- Students already identified by the school as being most at risk of educational disadvantage and at risk of early school leaving
- Students accessing SET or SNA school supports during the school year
- The Post-Primary School Scheme 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 arrived in Ireland from Ukraine and other countries
- Students from Traveller and Roma communities

Schools are best placed and have the autonomy to determine which students are most likely to be at risk of educational disadvantage. Schools are also best placed to determine how this scheme will be run to meet the needs of their cohorts of students .

**A Home-based programme will only be available for students with complex special educational needs where their school is not running a Summer Programme or a place on a school-based programme is unavailable.**

## Duration of Scheme

The Post-Primary School Scheme should run for 2 weeks during the school summer holidays. The weeks do not have to be consecutive, the scheme is flexible to allow schools choose weeks which best suit their needs and staff availability. The scheme cannot run on weekends or on a Bank Holiday.

## Staffing allocation - Number of groups

Pupils enrolled in special classes	Staffing (teachers and SNAs) is the same as the special class resource allocation which exists during the school year eg. Pupils are enrolled in a special class for children with Autism: Pupil/Teacher ratio for these Summer programmes is 6:1 and two SNAs.
Pupils with complex special educational needs and/or pupils at risk of educational disadvantage enrolled in mainstream classes****	Pupil Teacher ratio will be 12:1 and one SNA

<p>A combined group of pupils with <b>special class</b> placements and eligible pupils with <b>complex special educational needs and/or those at risk of educational disadvantage</b> who are in <b>mainstream class placements</b></p>	<p>Staffing (teachers and SNAs) are the same as the special class allocation which exists during the school year eg. Pupil has a place in a special class for children with Autism: Pupil/Teacher ratio for the Summer programme is 6:1 and two SNAs</p>
<p>The Department's approach is intended to be flexible so as to maximise the number of schools and students participating. If schools have any queries in relation to minimum thresholds please contact <a href="mailto:schoolsummerprogramme@education.gov.ie">schoolsummerprogramme@education.gov.ie</a></p> <p>****If more than six places are assigned to pupils with complex special educational needs the school may form additional group(s) by emailing the Department for approval to form additional group(s).</p>	

## Minimum student numbers required

It is anticipated that there should be a minimum of 4 students per group. However, the Department's approach is intended to be flexible so as to maximise the number of pupils and schools participating. If schools have any queries in relation to minimum thresholds please contact [schoolsummerprogramme@education.gov.ie](mailto:schoolsummerprogramme@education.gov.ie)

## 2. Application process

### Online Registration Portal

Post-primary schools that wish to participate in the 2023 Summer Programme must register on the Department's Post-Primary Online Registration Portal.

The portal will be available on [www.gov.ie/summerprogramme](http://www.gov.ie/summerprogramme) soon after the launch of the programme to allow schools to consider what scale of programme they can run. The opening date of the portal will be communicated to schools with the appropriate link.

Following registration, sanction emails will issue to schools outlining the resources that have been sanctioned.

### Resource Allocation Appeals

If a school has a query or wish to appeal for additional staffing including SNA support, their Organiser should contact [schoolsummerprogramme@education.gov.ie](mailto:schoolsummerprogramme@education.gov.ie) setting out the basis of the appeal prior to the commencement of their programme.

Closing date for appeals will be communicated to schools when the registration portal opens.

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## 3. Staffing resources

The roles of the **Organiser** and **Manager** are not restricted to the school principal. It is encouraged that these roles are developed within the school to ease workloads

**These roles create new development and leadership opportunities for school staff and growth in distributed leadership within schools.**

### Organiser Role

The new Organiser Role can be undertaken by any permanent or fixed term teacher, including the principal, in the participating school and is limited to one person in the school. The role will carry a gross payment of €2,000 for participating schools only, which can be claimed once their school's programme starts. Where more than one teacher is interested in this role, it is the responsibility of the Boards of Management to select the most suitable candidate. The Organiser will undertake specific duties as outlined below.

It is envisaged that the bulk of the Organiser's work will include preparation work for the programme which will begin in February 2023 through to the commencement of the Summer Programme.

Hours associated with this role should be recorded and may be used for some or all of the following activities:

- Engage with associated Summer Programme training provided by the Department and/or other agencies.
- Familiarise teachers/SNAs with guidance materials and resources provided by the Department.
- Recruit staff to work on the summer programme, both internally and externally
- Where schools are using external staff, establish procedures to facilitate the sharing of relevant student information, appropriate planning documentation and details of school policies and procedures to new staff or to staff who are unfamiliar with the students.
- Work collaboratively with school personnel to identify the students who should participate on the school-based programme and communicate with their parents/guardians.
- Develop the school's summer programme and activities in line with this year's theme.
- Develop a timetable for the Summer Programme.
- Where required, make arrangements for transport.
- Liaise with the school's Esinet Local Administrator to ensure they include external staff on the schools resource / staff list. This will need to be done before the Summer Programme Manager takes over.

Collaboration will be needed between the Organiser and the school's Summer Programme Manager prior to commencement of each scheme to support the delivery of the Summer

Programme in the school. This handover of duties to the Summer Programme Manager is needed as part of the Organiser's preparation work.

## Summer Programme Manager Role

The Summer Programme Manager role is a change in title from the Overseer Role last year.

Each school must appoint a Manager for the Summer Programme. The role of Summer Programme Manager can be undertaken by any permanent or fixed term teacher, including the principal and Summer Programme Organiser in the participating school.

The role of Summer Programme Manager may be shared between more than one permanent teacher within the school, however, only one Manager can work in that capacity in the school in any one day. Each Manager will only be paid for the days/weeks of the programme that they work in the role.

The Summer Programme Manager is not permitted to participate in the programme in a teaching role as they will be responsible for managing and leading the programme within the school.

The Manager(s) must be present for the full duration of the programme in order to deal with any issues that may arise.

The Summer Programme Manager role is not limited to, but will include the following duties:

- Acting as the point of contact for the Department and/or Education Centre and parents in relation to the Summer Programme
- Acting in a liaison role with other staff members working on the programme regarding any issues they might be experiencing
- Establishing and ensuring that their programme operates within resources as sanctioned by the Department
- Where applicable, dealing with any issues relating to transport services for participating students
- Ensuring appropriate returns to the Department in respect of teacher, SNA, Organiser and Manager remuneration on or before published deadline dates
- Ensuring all staff involved with the payment process are issued with any relevant guidance documentation provided by the Department
- Submitting claims to the Department or Education Centre for capitation/grant payments and any transport costs
- Ensuring that any Summer Programme evaluation material is completed and returned to the Department, including online evaluation questionnaires

## **Role of the Teacher**

Ideally, schools offering the summer programme will be assisted by the participation of teachers who are familiar with the needs of the children or young people attending. Where teachers have this familiarity it will be easier for them to establish learning priorities aligned to existing support plans and to design a programme of support designed to maintain connection to the school. Where other teachers are employed, these teachers should seek access to the most recent support plan for the students to help with establishing learning priorities. Teachers should maintain a record of content and skills taught during the Summer Programme and provide a summary of this to the school and the parents, as appropriate.

## **Role of the Special Needs Assistant (SNA)**

Where possible, schools offering the Summer Programme should seek to secure the participation of SNAs who are familiar with the students who will be attending. The roles and duties of the SNAs during the summer programme should continue to be in line with roles outlined in the school's SEN policy and reflect existing care plans for the students. There should be a particular emphasis on attending to health and care needs and fostering independence.

SNAs must be at least 17 years of age to work on the Summer Programme

## **Recruitment of external staff**

Schools can employ teachers and/or SNAs from outside of their school if the staff normally employed by the school are not available for any/all of the summer programme.

Schools are advised to establish procedures to facilitate the sharing of student information, relevant planning documentation and details of school policies and procedures to new teachers or to teachers who are unfamiliar with the students. Further guidance will be provided to schools and their Organisers as part of supports for Summer Programme 2023.

The Teaching Council and Irish Primary Principals Network (IPPN) will promote the summer programme with this year's graduate teachers, Professional Masters of Education (PME) student teachers and undergraduate students registered under Route 5 to increase the supply of available teachers this summer. More information is available for each category of teacher in the relevant sections below.

To help teachers and SNAs identify summer programme vacancies in schools, the IPPN has created Summer Provision Noticeboards. These noticeboards can be viewed by creating an account on [www.educationposts.ie](http://www.educationposts.ie). This will help schools to find relevant staff in their local area.

Schools must comply with standard recruitment and vetting procedures in the employment of all staff.

## Recruitment of graduate teachers

Graduate teachers can work on the Summer Programme where they have commenced their registration process with the Teaching Council and where the following conditions are fulfilled:

1. They have received their final results from their HEI confirming they are eligible for registration with the Teaching Council
2. Garda vetting has been completed as part of their application for registration with the Teaching Council.
3. Their registration with the Council will be finalised prior to 06 October 2023.

Teachers who meet the above conditions who have not completed their Teaching Council registration will be paid at the unqualified rate for their participation with the programme. Only teachers who are registered under Post-Primary Route 2 can only be paid the post-primary qualified rate from their registration date as advised by the Teaching Council.

## Recruitment of PME student teachers

A PME student teacher registered with the Teaching Council under Route 3 Further Education can work on the summer programme.

PME student teachers currently in Year 1 of the programme, who have applied for registration with the Teaching Council under Further Education, can be engaged by post-primary schools 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 Further Education will be finalised prior to 06 October 2023.

PME student teachers who are registered with the Teaching Council under the Further Education route will be paid at the unqualified rate for work on the summer programme.

## Recruitment of undergraduate student teachers

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

Undergraduate student teachers registered with the Teaching Council under Route 5 will be paid at the unqualified rate for work on the summer programme.

Graduate teachers, PME student teachers and Route 5 undergraduate student teachers will be paid in the same manner as substitute staff.

## **4. Staff information**

### **Payment rates**

Managers, teachers and SNAs who work on the programme will be paid for this work based on the rates they are normally paid during the school year, i.e. their personal rate.

Where a teacher participates in the programme in the SNA role they will receive the SNA rate of pay.

### **Substitute rates of pay**

Contracted teachers and SNAs will be remunerated for their work based on the rates they are normally paid during the school year i.e. their personal rate. All others will be paid a daily/hourly rate of pay.

### **Eligibility of teachers/SNAs on approved leave**

A teacher or SNA who is availing of approved paid or unpaid leave from his/her employment during the period of the summer programme is not eligible to participate. However, a teacher or SNA who is on career break or who is job sharing may be employed as a teacher or SNA during the period of the programme. Job sharing teachers or SNAs can participate full time in the summer programme.

### **Retired teachers**

Teachers who have retired on medical grounds Strands 1 and 2 cannot participate in the summer programme.

Teachers retired under Strand 3 may participate in the summer programme. Please note they are subject to the restrictions of the pension scheme governing their retirement.



## 5. Payment process

Participating schools will utilise the Department's Esinet system to submit claims. This will allow claims to be processed on an ongoing basis during the summer.

The Department will endeavour to reduce payment times this year for all complete payment claims submitted before published deadline dates. The Department will process payments to teachers and SNAs as completed payment claims are submitted over the summer period through the Esinet portal.

The Principal or Local Administrator is to assign Summer Programme Data Approver and Summer Programme Data Entry roles within the school for the purposes of the summer programme.

The Summer Programme Manager is responsible for ensuring appropriate returns are submitted to the Department on or before published deadline dates; They must ensure that all staff involved with the programme are issued details regarding the payment process and are provided with any relevant guidance documentation provided by the Department;

It will be important that all payment claims are submitted by published deadline dates to ensure staff are paid on time. Schools should only submit their payment claims when their programme has concluded.

Guidance and support will be provided by the Department throughout the process. Further details on how claims can be submitted will be issued to participating schools in due course

ETB schools will submit their claims through claim forms that will be provided by the Department.

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## 6. Additional supports

### Summer Programme Grant Payment

A non-pay grant of €45 per student per week will be paid to all schools participating in the Post-Primary School Scheme.

The grant can only be processed for payment once the school has completed the student Number returns on the Esinet portal. Schools will be provided with full guidance on how to make this return.

Payments for this grant will commence in October 2023 for schools that have made this return. ETB schools will make their student number return as part of their claim form

### Transport

- **School Transport for Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)**

School transport services for the Summer Programme 2023 may be available to pupils who normally avail of transport under School Transport Scheme for Children with Special Educational Needs during the school year.

A family who is availing of a special transport grant during the school year may continue to do so if their child has been sanctioned to attend the Summer Programme in their school. Grants are paid in the normal manner upon receipt of a Statement of Attendance Form from their school.

When a school registers for the Summer Programme they must do the following if they require SEN transport services to continue:

- When a school registers for the Summer Programme they will receive a link to a school transport application form.
- Complete the form fully for all pupils who are currently on SEN transport (pupils who avail of a Special Transport Grant do not need to be listed)
- Return completed form to the Department's School Transport section as soon as possible to [SENtransport@education.gov.ie](mailto:SENtransport@education.gov.ie)
- Any queries can be sent to [SENtransport@education.gov.ie](mailto:SENtransport@education.gov.ie)

All School Transport Application Forms must be submitted by the school before **02 May 2023** in order for transport to be in place for the Summer Programme 2023.

Escorts who are required to assist on existing SEN School Transport Services as outlined above should continue to be paid in the normal manner.

Only services who have received sanction for an escort by the Department during the school year will be funded in this regard.

- **Mainstream School Transport**

It is important to note that the Department's Post-Primary School Transport Scheme will not operate for the duration of the summer programme in 2023.

Where transport to and from the Post-Primary Summer Programme is identified as a barrier for certain pupils to attend the programme, schools may make their own local transport arrangements and claim the associated costs from the Summer Programme Section of the Department up to a maximum of €1,750 per week.

Transport should only be arranged for those pupils who are already availing of school transport under the Department's Post-Primary School Transport Scheme. Please note that only transport to and from the summer programme is covered by this grant.

All claims in respect of transport costs must be accompanied by the following:

- the appropriate receipts e.g. private bus company receipts, taxi receipts;
- names of pupils who were provided with transport to and from the summer programme and;
- confirmation that they are currently availing of the Department's Post-Primary School Transport Scheme (Bus Éireann school bus ticket Id number)

and submitted to [schoolsummerprogramme@education.gov.ie](mailto:schoolsummerprogramme@education.gov.ie) once the programme has concluded.

All queries relating to the payment arrangements for mainstream transport should be sent to that address. Payments will commence in October 2023 to schools that have provided the required information. Where ETB schools have provided the above information their transport costs will be reimbursed as part of their overall claim.

## 7. Further information

### Child Protection

The child protection procedures for schools provide that boards of management must designate a senior full-time member of the registered teaching staff of the school as the designated liaison person (DLP) for the school. It is expected that the DLP will normally be the principal.

It is also the responsibility of the board of management to designate another member of the full time registered teaching staff of the school (to be known as the deputy DLP) to assume the responsibilities of the DLP, in the absence of the DLP. It is expected that, where possible, the deputy DLP will normally be a deputy principal of the school.

In order to ensure that duties arising under the various obligations of the school under Child Protection are met, it is important that there is no delay in reporting any child protection concerns that may arise.

In the event that the Summer Programme Manager is someone other than the Designated Liaison Person (DLP)/Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP), the DLP/Deputy DLP should be contacted immediately to deal with any child protection concerns that may arise.

If the DLP/Deputy DLP are not available to be contacted during this period the Board of Management/ETB should make arrangements to designate the Summer Programme Manager to take up the role on a temporary basis. This decision needs to be taken by the board of management and clearly documented in the board's minutes. The names of the acting DLP/DDLP need to be displayed prominently at the entrance/exit to the area of the school where the summer programme is taking place. Appropriate training for the acting DLP/DDLP needs to be undertaken for their roles prior to the commencement of the summer programme.

It is important that there is absolute clarity in relation to the arrangements being used and that all staff including the DLP and Deputy DLP are aware of the limited and exceptional circumstances in which they are to be activated.

Procedures need to be in place to ensure that the anti-bullying policy and procedures are implemented/adhered to during the summer programme and that the principal of the school and the board of management are informed of any concern/incidents of bullying.

### Irish language

In Irish-medium schools, it is important that Irish is the working and communicative language of the summer programme.

### Public Health Guidelines

Schools are required to operate summer programmes in accordance with any current public health advice and guidelines. The most up to date information is published on the HSE website at: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/covid19/>

## Length of school day

The time allocated should be based on the existing school timetable in terms of beginning and end times each day. Teachers should use time at the beginning and end of the day for planning and review. Students should begin no later than 10.00 am and finish no earlier than 3 pm.

## Queries and Support

All relevant information and training resources for the summer programme can be found at this link: <https://www.gov.ie/Summerprogramme>

All other queries can be directed to [schoolsummerprogramme@education.gov.ie](mailto:schoolsummerprogramme@education.gov.ie)

A Summer Programme helpline is also available at 09064 84292, times and dates of availability will be published on <https://www.gov.ie/Summerprogramme>

NCSE provide resources to support the school-based summer programme. The resources support tutors to provide engaging learning experiences for students that focus on consolidating relationships with their schools, supporting physical, social and emotional well-being, developing resilience, building their confidence as learners and developing skills and routines to support successful transition into the next stage of their schooling. The resources will be available at this link: <https://ncse.ie/summer-programme>