



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

2025 Summer Programme ‘Building Confidence and Connections’

Mainstream Primary Schools

Overview – Terms and Conditions



Contents

Background		4
Summer Programme 2025	4	
Theme for Summer Programme 2025	6	
What's new for 2025 - School Meals Programme and Summer Programme	6	
What's continuing for 2025	6	
Supports for schools to offer the programme.	7	
1. Primary School Scheme		8
Pupil eligibility	8	
Duration of Scheme	11	
Staffing allocation - Number of groups	11	
Minimum pupil numbers required	11	
2. Literacy and Numeracy Summer Camp Programme/Campaí Samhraidh		12
Pupil eligibility	12	
Duration of camps	12	
Staffing allocation	12	
Minimum Pupils numbers required	12	
Staff training	13	
3. Application process		14
Online Registration Portal	14	
Resource Allocation Appeals	14	
4. Staffing Resources		15
Organiser Role	15	
Summer Programme Manager Role	16	
Role of the Teacher	17	
Role of the Special Needs Assistant (SNA)	17	
Recruitment of external staff	17	
Recruitment of graduate teachers	17	
Recruitment of PME student teachers	18	
Recruitment of undergraduate student teachers	18	
5. Staff Information		19
Payment rates	19	
Substitute rates of pay	19	
Eligibility of teachers/SNAs on approved leave	19	
Retired teachers	19	
6. Payments Process		20
7. Additional Support		21

Summer Programme Grant Payment	21	
Transport	21	
8. Provision of school meals		23
Selecting a Provider	24	
Schools being reimbursed for school meals	25	
9. Further Information		26
Child Protection	26	
Irish language	26	
Public Health Guidelines	26	
Length of school day	27	
Primary School Scheme	27	
DEIS Literacy and Numeracy Camps/Campaí Samhraidh	27	
Queries and Support	27	

Background

Summer Programme 2025

This year's Summer Programme is building upon the programmes of the last 4 years. The main priority for the 2025 Summer Programme is to ensure pupils with the most complex special educational needs should have access to a school-based programme. This year's programme is designed and developed to ensure supports are targeted to assist pupils with complex special educational needs. The 2025 Summer Programme for mainstream primary schools consists of two schemes:

1. The Primary School Scheme
2. The DEIS Literacy and Numeracy Summer Camp/Campaí Samhraidh.

The programme aims to support pupils' 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 pupils.

The Department of Education is seeking the involvement of all primary schools in the provision of the 2025 Summer Programme.

In June, July and August 2024, inspectors visited summer programmes in 115 schools: 29 primary, 70 post-primary, and 16 special schools. During the visits, inspectors looked at how the school prepared for the programme, the activities underway and the involvement of children and young people and their parents. In October and November 2024, inspectors returned to 34 of the schools: 12 primary, 17 post-primary and 5 special schools. During return visits, inspectors held group meetings with some of the young people who had participated in the programme, some parents and teachers. Inspectors also looked at how those who were involved in the summer programme had reported the progress of the young people to their school and to their parents.

Among the main findings of the inspection visits were:

- **Staff on summer programmes fostered good relationships with children and young people.**
- **The children and young people felt a sense of belonging and welcome in the school during the programme.**
- **The children and young people formed close friendships, strengthening their connection to the school community.**
- **The children and young people developed social skills such as appreciating differences and respecting diversity.**

- **Almost all teachers, principals, programmes organisers and managers felt that the summer programme made a difference to the children and young people when they returned to school in September.**

During meetings with inspectors at the follow-up visits, many teachers spoke of how their participation in the summer programme supported their own professional practice. The summer programme provided teachers with the opportunity to get to know children in different contexts, and consequently, they reported that they now had a better understanding of the needs of the children and were better able to support them.

Importantly also, a significant number of parents, particularly parents of children with complex special educational needs, told inspectors how much the summer programme supported them and their wider families. The supports included the fact that their child could now participate in an activity outside of the home, which for some, hadn't happened before.

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

Theme for Summer Programme 2025

The theme for this year's programme continues to be 'Building Confidence and Connections'. It is widely acknowledged that experiences with peers constitute an important developmental context for children and adolescents. Peer relationships provide a unique context in which children learn a range of critical social emotional skills, such as empathy, cooperation, and problem-solving strategies. Peers, or a group of young people who have similar interests, age or background serve as an important source of information, feedback and support to individuals as they develop a sense of self.

The Summer Programme is intended to be an enjoyable experience for both pupils and staff. The range of activities should reflect this year's theme and include opportunities for pupil-centred, play-based engagement.

Each school's Summer Programme Organiser will be required to attend online training which will be facilitated by Tralee Education Support Centre. In addition, further opportunities for collaboration and sharing of experience will be facilitated for Organisers.

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 2025 - School Meals Programme and Summer Programme

It is planned to commence in Summer 2025, a Holiday Hunger pilot project which will be implemented by utilising the Department of Social Protection's *School Meals Programme* and the Department of Education's *Summer Programme*.

Schools eligible for the *School Meals Programme* will be able to make meals available for the Summer Programme. Further information can be found in the section *Provision of School Meals* of this overview.

This is a key initiative as part of the Government priority to combat holiday hunger. It will also alleviate the costs for schools associated with running a Summer Programme. As this programme is a pilot, it will be reviewed in the 3rd quarter of 2025.

Any queries regarding the School Meals Programme can be sent to School.Meals@welfare.ie.

What's continuing for 2025

Previously there were separate schemes for the Inclusion Programme and Special Classes. The **Primary School Scheme** replaces and integrates both these schemes into one cohesive scheme for mainstream primary schools. It is still open to schools to offer places 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. Full details are in the primary school scheme section below.

This year's programme maintains the **Organiser role**, which has replaced the preparation hours in previous years, to help support schools in their planning and participation in the Summer Programme. Also, the **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 4](#) of this document.

There are two schemes available in the 2025 Summer Programme for **mainstream primary schools**

Summer Programme Schemes	Available to:
1. Primary School Scheme	All recognised mainstream primary schools (including schools with special classes and DEIS primary schools)
2. Literacy and Numeracy Summer Camp/Campai Samhraidh	All DEIS primary schools only

NOTE: Where a DEIS primary school plans to avail of both the Primary School Scheme and the Literacy and Numeracy Summer Camp/Campai Samhraidh, **both schemes should run concurrently as in 2024**. These schemes will be outlined in more detail in [Section 1](#) and [Section 2](#) of this document.

Supports 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 6](#) 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 4](#) of this document.

The **Organiser** role was introduced in 2023 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 4](#) of this document.

While many principals may wish to continue with organising and running the programme in their schools, similar to previous years, the 2025 Summer Programme permits principals to delegate these functions to other members of staff.

***NOTE:** In 2024, 90% of staff who participated on Primary Schools scheme and the Literacy & Numeracy Camps/Campaí Samhraidh were paid via ESINET by the end of August. The Department will continue to endeavour to facilitate early payment for those that participate in this scheme in 2025.

1. Primary School Scheme

Pupil eligibility

The 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.

Primary schools with special classes running a Primary School Scheme should prioritise those 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 the most 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 Primary School Scheme, pupils with complex special educational needs are defined as:

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

These pupils require highly individualised, intensive, targeted and additional teaching and learning supports as their special educational needs are enduring, and significantly impact on their learning and participation in the school environment. These pupils may present with the following:

- Significant needs with physical and/or sensory functioning (including pupils who are Deaf or have severe to profound hearing loss and pupils who are blind or have a severe to profound visual impairment)
- Significant needs in cognitive functioning and independence/daily living skills (including pupils who have moderate to severe OR significant/profound learning disability)
- Significant needs in social communication, social interaction combined with rigid repetitive patterns of behaviour

¹ See Guidelines for Primary Schools Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Classes for guidance in identifying and responding to pupils' needs as part of the Continuum of Support

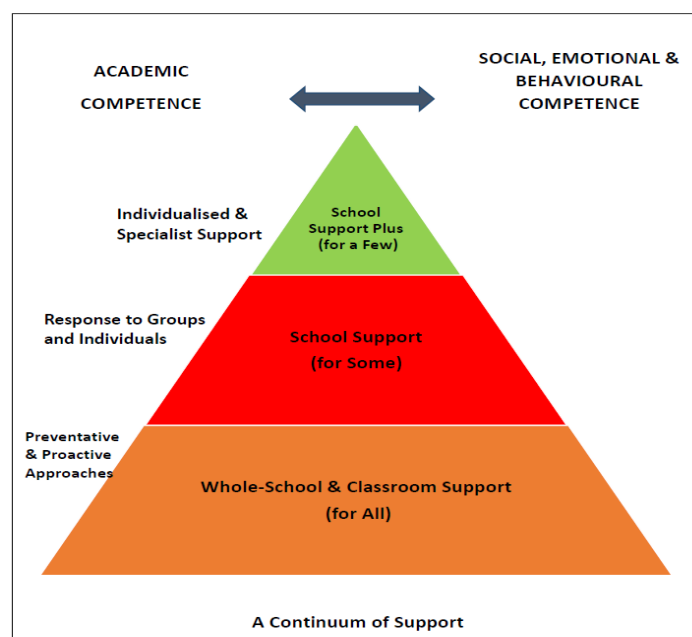
• [Guidelines for Primary Schools: Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Classes](#)

- Autistic Students
- Pupils with Down syndrome
- Pupils with severe OR significant emotional behavioural needs to the extent that these behaviours of concern are impacting on a pupil's ability to learn, to function independently and to participate fully in school life.

Children who meet the above criteria and are entering primary school in September 2025 are also eligible for the programme.

Continuum of Support

The Department has set out the Continuum of Support framework ([available here](#)) to assist schools in identifying and responding to pupils' 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 pupils 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 pupils. 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 Primary Schools Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Classes ([available here](#)) provide guidance for schools in identifying and responding to pupils' needs as part of the Continuum of Support framework.



The following is the criteria which can be used to identify and select pupils who they consider to be at risk of educational disadvantage.

- Pupils already identified by the school as being most at risk of educational disadvantage and at risk of early school leaving
- Pupils accessing SET or SNA school supports during the school year

- The Primary School Scheme also offers an opportunity for schools to address the needs of migrant pupils such as addressing English language skills and integration, including pupils who have arrived in Ireland from Ukraine and other countries
- Pupils from Traveller and Roma communities

Schools are best placed and have the autonomy to determine which pupils 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 pupils.

Where a school is not running a Summer Programme or a place on a school-based programme or alternative is unavailable, pupils with complex special educational needs will be able to apply for the Home-based programme.

Duration of Scheme

The Primary School Scheme should run for at least 2 weeks and for a maximum of 4 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 programme 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 (e.g. Pupils are enrolled in a special class for children with Autism: the 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
A combined group of pupils with special class placements and eligible pupils with complex special educational needs and/or those at risk of educational disadvantage who are in mainstream class placements	Staffing (teachers and SNAs) are the same as the special class allocation which exists during the school year (e.g. 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>*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> <p>In the special class group or the combined group setting, for the purposes of the Summer Programme, schools also have the flexibility to consider how best to align the existing resource allocation to accommodate more children into these groups.</p>	

Minimum pupil numbers required

It is anticipated that there should be a minimum of 4 pupils 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

2. Literacy and Numeracy Summer Camp Programme/Campaí Samhraidh

DEIS schools who participate in both the Primary School Scheme and the DEIS Literacy and Numeracy Summer Camp Programme/Campaí Samhraidh **should run both schemes concurrently**. For example, if the Primary School Scheme is run during the first two weeks in July, then the Literacy and Numeracy Summer Camp/Campai Samhraidh should also be run during the same period.

This coordinated approach aims to create a more inclusive learning environment for all pupils during the summer months, whilst also supporting pupils in the development and maintenance of positive relationships with their peers.

Pupil eligibility

Schools are free to target the cohort of pupils they feel will benefit from the experience, taking due cognisance of the importance of early intervention and pupils' individual needs. Schools may allocate places to all pupils in the primary school, including 6th class pupils.

Please note that pupils enrolling in Junior Infants in September 2025 are not eligible to attend these camps.

Duration of camps

Schools can choose to run up to 2 literacy and numeracy camps/campaí samhraidh of 1 week's duration each during the school summer holidays. The camps may not be run on a weekend or a Bank Holiday.

Staffing allocation

Schools can support up to 36 pupils per week each week, with each camp supported by 1 teacher for every 12 pupils. Schools may also apply to run camps comprising 2 teachers for 24 pupils.

All teachers working on DEIS Primary literacy and numeracy camps/campaí samhraidh must be fully registered with the Teaching Council.

The design of the Summer Camp, in line with the framework set out in the **Camp Handbook** will be decided by each school, based on its pupils' needs. The programme is funded to target educational and social disadvantage. It seeks to assist pupils who are experiencing social or academic difficulties in language and numeracy who would benefit from a week-long Summer Camp with a very favourable teacher-pupil ratio.

Minimum Pupils numbers required

Schools are asked to note that camps must be comprised of a minimum of 12 pupils to be considered eligible to participate in the DEIS Literacy and Numeracy Summer Camp Programme/Campaí Samhraidh.

Staff training

Training sessions for the delivery of the Literacy and Numeracy/Campaí Samhraidh Programme for DEIS primary schools will be hosted by Dublin West/Navan Education Centres. Further details will issue to all participating schools.

3. Application process

Online Registration Portal

Primary schools that wish to participate in the 2025 Summer Programme must register on the Department's Online Registration Portal for Primary Schools.

The portal will be available on 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 for each scheme that has registered and 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 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.

4. 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 Organiser Role will carry a gross payment of **€2,000** for participating schools only, which can be claimed once their school's programme starts. The role of Organiser can be undertaken by any permanent or fixed term teacher, including the principal, in the participating school and should be limited to one person in the school. 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 2025 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 pupil information, appropriate planning documentation and details of school policies and procedures to new staff or to staff who are unfamiliar with the pupils.
- Work collaboratively with school personnel to identify the pupils 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.
- Ensure that accommodations (i.e. classrooms, school buildings) in the school are available for the duration of the programme.
- 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 in previous years.

Each school must appoint a Manager for their overall 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. It is recommended that this appointment be considered in the context of the person with the most relevant special educational needs (SEN) experience.

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 as the point of contact for the Inspectorate in the event of school visit during 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 pupils
- Ensuring appropriate returns to the Department in respect of teacher, SNA, Organiser and Manager remuneration on or before published deadline dates
- Completing a short survey in relation to the Summer Meals Programme (where availed).
- 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 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 prepare 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 pupils to help with establishing learning priorities.

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 pupils 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 pupils. 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 pupil information, relevant planning documentation and details of school policies and procedures to new teachers or to teachers who are unfamiliar with the pupils. Further guidance will be provided to schools and their Organisers as part of supports for Summer Programme 2025.

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 Programme Noticeboards. These noticeboards will be available in the coming weeks and can be viewed by creating an account on 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 3rd October 2025.

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. Teachers who are registered under Primary Route 1 can only be paid the 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 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 3rd October 2025.

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 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.

5. 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 or Strands 1 and 2 of the Early Retirement Scheme cannot participate in the summer programme.

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

6. Payments 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.

NOTE: In 2024, over 90% of staff who participated on Primary School scheme were paid via ESINET by the end of August. The Department will continue to endeavour to facilitate early payment for those that participate in this scheme in 2025.

7. Additional Support

Summer Programme Grant Payment

Primary School Scheme

A non-pay grant of €30 per pupil per week will be paid in respect of pupils participating in the Primary School Scheme.

The grant payment can only be processed **once the school** has completed the Pupil 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 2025 for schools that have made this return.

DEIS Literacy and Numeracy Camps/Campaí Samhraidh

A non-pay grant of €30 per pupil per week will be paid to all schools participating in the DEIS Literacy and Numeracy Camps/Campa Samhraidh

The funding for the DEIS camps will be made before the camps commence through the relevant Education Centre. The Education Centre will communicate directly with all schools that have registered on the Online Registration Portal.

Transport

NOTE: If you require school transport services for children with special educational needs during the Summer Programme 2025, you must submit the School Transport Application Forms **as soon as possible** to ensure that the required transport can be arranged.

School transport for Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

School transport services for the Summer Programme 2025 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, where they require SEN Transport Services to continue, the **Summer Programme Organiser** must carry out the following:

- On registering for the Summer Programme, schools will receive a link to a School Transport Application form in their confirmation email.
- 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 the completed form to the Department's School Transport section via email to SENtransport@education.gov.ie **as soon as possible**.
- Any queries can be sent to SENtransport@education.gov.ie

All School Transport Application Forms must be submitted by the school before **11 April 2025** in order for transport to be in place for the Summer Programme 2025.

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 Primary School Transport Scheme will not operate for the duration of the summer programme in 2025.

Where transport to and from the 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 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 Primary School Transport Scheme (Bus Éireann school bus ticket ID number)

and submitted to schoolsummerprogramme@education.gov.ie once the programme has concluded. All queries relating to the payment arrangements for **mainstream transport** should be sent to that email address. Payments will commence in October 2025 to schools that have provided the required information.

8. Provision of school meals

This year, on registering your school's interest in running a Summer Programme in 2025, schools will be asked to confirm if they wish to provide school meals during their Summer Programme. Where a registered school indicates that they will be availing of the School Meals Programme, certain information will be shared with the Department of Social Protection for the purposes of reimbursing schools later in the year. The following scenarios have been developed to help guide you through the process.

Scenario 1

School is currently availing of the School Meals Programme.

Existing service can be extended to include the Summer Programme.

1. The school contacts their current service provider to ascertain if the provider is willing to extend their service to supply one meal per day per child attending the duration of the Summer Programme.
2. If the existing service provider is able to extend their existing service, the school should advise them of:
 - The dates when the Summer Programme will be run.
 - The number of weeks that the Summer Programme will run for.
 - How many children will be in attendance each week.
3. On registering to run the Summer Programme, the school will confirm the dates, the number of weeks the Summer Programme will run, how many children will attend each week, their supplier's name, and one meal type being offered. Schools will also confirm that they **will be availing of the School Meals Programme with their current provider**.
4. Department of Education will send this information to the Department of Social Protection (DSP) who will issue a form to the school, which will be returned to DSP with supplier invoices as soon as Summer Programme is completed so payment application can be processed.

Scenario 2

School is currently availing of the School Meals Programme.

The existing service cannot be extended to include the Summer Programme.

1. As in Scenario 1, the school should contact their current service provider to ascertain if they are willing to extend their service to supply one meal per day per child attending the duration of the Summer Programme.
2. If the current provider is unable to extend the existing service for the Summer Programme, the school should:
 - Before the Summer Programme begins, follow [public procurement guidelines](#), and,
 - Select the most suitable provider (see section on [Selecting a Provider](#)).

The quotes should cover:

- Adequate provisions to ensure the school can provide one meal per day per child attending the Summer Programme.
 - The number of weeks that the Summer Programme will run.
 - The meal rate per child must not exceed the rate approved by the Department of Social Protection (DSP) (see rate table).
3. On registering to run the Summer Programme, the school will confirm the dates, the number of weeks the Summer Programme will run, how many children will attend each week, and the one meal type being offered. Schools will also confirm that they **will be availing of the School Meals Programme with a different provider**.
 4. Department of Education will send this information to the Department of Social Protection (DSP) who will issue a form to the school, which will be returned to DSP with supplier invoices as soon as Summer Programme is completed so payment can be processed.

Scenario 3

School is not currently availing of the School Meals Programme but wishes to have a school meal provided.

1. As in scenario 2, the school should:

- Before the Summer Programme begins, follow [public procurement guidelines](#), and,
- Select the most suitable provider (see section on [Selecting a Provider](#)).

The quotes should cover:

- Adequate provisions to ensure the school can provide one meal per day per child attending the Summer Programme.
- The number of weeks that the Summer Programme will run.
- The meal rate per child per day must not exceed €3.20 for primary and special schools.
- Satisfy nutritional guidelines

All clubs <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/137751/e73efe75-cb05-43c7-bc01-916249f90380.pdf#page=null>

Hot meals www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/128268/d07bed24-dd1d-4055-8ced-5e381621ca65.pdf#page=null

2. On registering to run the Summer Programme, the school will confirm the dates, the number of weeks the Summer Programme will run, how many children will attend each week, and the one meal type being offered. Schools will also confirm that they **will be availing of the School Meals Programme as a first-time participant**.
3. Department of Education will send this information to the Department of Social Protection (DSP) who will issue a form to the school, which will be returned to DSP with supplier invoices as soon as Summer Programme is completed so payment can be processed.

Scenario 4

The school does not wish to participate in the *School Meals Programme*.

Participation in the *School Meals Programme* for the Summer Programme is optional. On registering to run the Summer Programme, a school not wishing to participate will confirm that they **will not be availing of the School Meals Programme**.

Selecting a Provider

If your school is already part of the School Meals Scheme, and your current service provider can provide meals for the Summer Programme 2025, there is no need to select a new provider.

If your school* -

- (i) will be availing of the Summer Programme with a different provider than the usual School Meals Programme provider; or
- (ii) wish to avail of the Summer Programme as a first-time participant,

- please see guidance below.

Regarding the school's procurement obligations as a public body, the following guidelines must be followed:

- When the total contract value is less than €5,000, seeking one proposal will suffice.

- When the total contract value is between €5,000 and €50,000, the school must seek a minimum of 3 proposals.
- When the total contract value exceeds €50,000, a tender must be published.

When selecting a provider for school meals, schools must also take into consideration:

- The suitability of the service provider to the school's requirements
- The standard of the provision
- Complexities of the service requirements, including ordering and delivery system, dietary requirements, the need for food to be liquidised, etc.
- Adherence to all Health and Safety obligations by service providers
- Adherence to the nutritional guidelines by service providers:
 - All Clubs: <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/137751/e73efe75-cb05-43c7-bc01-916249f90380.pdf#page=null>
 - Hot Meals: www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/128268/d07bed24-dd1d-4055-8ced-5e381621ca65.pdf#page=null

*it is strongly advised that schools using a different/new provider should only consider pre-prepared meals being delivered 'ready-to-be-eaten'.

Registered schools that indicate the need for a new service provider for the Summer Programme 2025, will be contacted by SPU, via e-mail, sometime after the closing date for registrations.

Schools being reimbursed for school meals

The Department of Social Protection (DSP) will reimburse schools for one club type, per pupil attending per day for the number of days the Summer Programme runs in your school. Only one club type is permitted per school as outlined in the table below:

Club Name	Examples of food to be provided	Maximum Rate
Breakfast or Snack	1 serving of wholemeal or wholegrain cereal or bread plus 1 serving of fruit or 1 serving of milk, yoghurt or cheese.	€0.75
Lunch or Afterschool <u>with</u> Drink	Wholemeal or wholegrain sandwich or roll containing 1 serving of meat, poultry, egg or cheese and 1 serving salad plus 1 serving fruit plus a drink, for example water, milk or unsweetened juice.	€1.70
Dinner <u>with</u> Drink	1 serving of meat, poultry, egg or cheese and 1 serving of potatoes, pasta or rice plus 2 servings of vegetables or fruit plus a drink, for example milk, water or unsweetened juice	€2.50
Hot Meal	Per nutritional standards document	€3.20

The above information is for guidance purposes only. All queries regarding the *School Meals Programme* should be directed to School.Meals@welfare.ie.

9. 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

Primary School Scheme

The length of the school day is aligned with the normal school day as outlined in Circular 11/95.

DEIS Literacy and Numeracy Camps/Campaí Samhraidh

Activities for the DEIS literacy and numeracy camps will be provided for 22.5 hours over the course of the week.

- The starting time for a camp is to be no later than 10 am
- Four hours of instruction must be provided each day
- In addition to the four hours instruction, a total of 30 minutes is set aside each day for a fully-supervised lunch/break period

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

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 pupils 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 become available at this link:

<https://ncse.ie/summerprogramme> - following an information training webinar for teachers.