




An Roinn Oideachais
agus Óige
Department of Education
and Youth

Education Plan 2025

Department of Education
and Youth



“Deliver a world class education system which breaks down barriers and ensures every child can achieve their full potential.”

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Foreword from Minister for Education and Youth Helen McEntee TD

I am delighted to publish Education Plan 2025, my first as Minister for Education and Youth. This comprehensive plan sets out in detail a substantial programme of work to be carried out by my department throughout 2025. My priority is to deliver a world class education system which breaks down barriers and ensures every child can achieve their full potential.

Delivering a world class education system means taking all necessary action to tackle educational disadvantage. This includes ensuring that students are supported in school but also supported to attend school. This year, I will publish a new DEIS Plan which will set out the actions we will take to support all children and young people who are at risk of educational disadvantage. Closing the performance gap between DEIS and non-DEIS schools, developing a new DEIS+ Scheme to support those schools with the highest levels of students at risk of acute disadvantage, and ensuring more tailored supports are available to schools – will ensure that schools and students can access the right supports, at the right time.

Since COVID-19 there has been a significant increase in absenteeism in schools and I will implement measures to address this serious issue, including legislative change. With Youth now transferred into the Department of Education, there is also a significant opportunity to better align the formal education system with youth services.

Supporting children with additional needs is an absolute priority of mine. Along with Minister of State Moynihan, I will open additional special classes and special schools, while ensuring the vast majority of children with special educational needs are taught in mainstream schools. A new Education Therapy Service will ensure that therapists will be based in our schools, starting with special schools, providing students with the services they need, in their school environment. Not only will this benefit students in ensuring they can receive their occupational therapy or speech and language therapy, but it will also ensure that children will receive the right supports in the right place at the right time. All teachers must be able to support children of all abilities which is why I will introduce a mandatory training placement in a special school or a special class for all student teachers, as well as supporting the development of high-quality teacher professional learning opportunities. SNAs are at the heart of our schools, I have recently announced that a Redeployment Plan will be introduced for SNAs, meaning that where they may no longer be required in a school, SNAs can be redeployed to a vacant post.

We are living through a digital and AI revolution which is changing the world in ways which are as profound today as the industrial revolution was 200 years ago. A world class education system also means ensuring we have a curriculum which fully equips children and young people to succeed and thrive in our changing world. The new Primary School Curriculum Framework builds on the successes of the 1999 curriculum while responding to challenges, changing needs and priorities for children's learning, while the implementation of Senior Cycle Reform will ensure we can recognise a broader range of skills and will help reduce the pressure faced by students. We have to support students, teachers and schools to successfully implement reform, in particular by providing the support, resources and mentoring need to support leadership and teacher professional learning.

I am determined to support everyone working in our schools. Supporting teachers in their vital work is essential, which is why teacher supply will continue to be a priority for me. I have moved to provide teachers with access to earlier permanent contracts and ensured that eligible teachers who trained abroad will be able to apply to have their qualifications recognised here. My department is developing a workforce development plan and I will continue to take action to increase the number of teachers. Secretaries and caretakers are at the heart of all our school communities and I am determined to work with them in the coming months and years.

I will also work to ensure that schools have the financial supports that they need and will seek to make further progress in future budgets.

I want to expand opportunities for pupils and students to attend Gaelscoileanna and Gaelcholáistí, to establish Gaelscoileanna and Gaelcholáistí where there is demand, and also, to support parents choosing Irish-medium education for their children. I will prioritise the publication of a new policy on Irish-medium education outside of the Gaeltacht in the coming months. One of the key objectives of this policy will be to consider

actions we can take to increase the provision of Gaelscoileanna and Gaelcholáistí.

I am delighted to have the opportunity to work with so many dedicated organisations, youth workers and those providing a range of youth services across the country, to ensure that high quality youth services are available that meet young people's needs. Youth work and youth services provide immense opportunities for our young people to grow and develop, and I am committed to exploring how we can enhance services and ensure greater alignment and complementarity between the formal and non-formal education sectors.

The actions in Education Plan 2025 demonstrate the breadth of the work programme, and the commitment to deliver for everyone who works in and is involved in the education sector, to ensure that together with our partners, we facilitate children and young people, through learning, to achieve their full potential. Each year, I will publish a new Education Plan. I will ensure responsibility for the delivery of each action is assigned with a clear timeline for delivery.

These are just a few examples of my priorities for the coming months; there are many more in this plan and the Programme for Government sets out ambitious goals for us to achieve, most of which require significant partnership across many different actors in the education sector. I look forward to working with Minister of State Moynihan, department officials and our partners to deliver against our collective commitments, to ensure that every member of our educational communities, especially our children and young people, their families and all the staff that engage with them feel valued and supported.

Helen McEntee TD
Minister for Education and Youth



Minister of State with responsibility for Special Education and Inclusion Michael Moynihan TD

As Minister of State for Special Education and Inclusion, I welcome the publication of Education Plan 2025. Through the delivery of these actions, we will see improved capacity, service delivery and supports for all those with special educational needs and their families.

This Education Plan includes a raft of initiatives that will help bolster the support of children with additional needs in our schools. By supporting those with additional needs, we will ensure that these children and young people are afforded equity of opportunity and feel valued within the education system.

As well as working to improve the delivery timelines for the provision of special class and special school placements, I am eager to advance the development of the Education Therapy Service, beginning first in special schools before extending to special classes in mainstream schools. This will be transformative for not just children receiving therapies in school, but for how it will support the wider school community too. Ultimately, I believe, this will also ease the strain and stress that parents can feel in accessing therapy support.

As I have said previously, SNAs are a pivotal part of our school communities, providing a meaningful and positive school experience for children with special educational needs. Work to finalise the SNA workforce development plan is ongoing and it will help pave the way for how best to support SNAs into the future, while also ensuring appropriate supports are in place to facilitate attendance and participation by all children in school.

Together with our partners and stakeholders we are committed to delivering on these priority actions, which will enable us to make progress towards an education system where all learners are supported to reach their full potential, regardless of their circumstances.

As Minister of State with responsibility for Special Education and Inclusion I also have responsibility for school transport – an essential service for those families that need it. In 2025 I will ensure that an evaluation of the pilot projects conducted in the 2024/2025 school year is carried out in order that learnings from these pilot projects can inform further projects as part of the implementation of the School Transport Scheme Review on a phased basis.

I look forward to working with Minister McEntee, department officials and our partners to deliver the strategic actions outlined in this plan.

Michael Moynihan TD
Minister of State with responsibility for Special Education and Inclusion



Introduction from Secretary General Bernie McNally

I am very pleased to present Education Plan 2025, the department's annual plan, which sets out our high-level priorities for the coming year. These priorities are derived from our Statement of Strategy, and this plan is the mechanism by which the department will drive progress on the achievement of our strategic goals.

The department and its partners deliver on an exceptionally large and complex workload every year, covering, for example, operations, education and youth policy, inspections, psychological supports, planning and delivery of school buildings, governance, policy, parliamentary support and reform. In 2025, we will continue to deliver across a large work programme, and this Education Plan will help us focus on the delivery of these important reforms and new initiatives.

I wish to thank the department staff and all our partners for their commitment, professionalism and dedication, as they develop policy and deliver services to a high standard. The publication of the priority actions outlined in Education Plan 2025 enables us to focus on the major challenges and on the strategic issues which will have the greatest impact in the coming year, while at the same time laying the groundwork to deliver further priorities next year and beyond.

This year, we will publish a new Statement of Strategy, which will set out our vision, mission, values and goals for the next three years. This new Statement of Strategy will build on the goals of the current statement which are the foundation stones of this Education Plan.

The key pillar of the department's work continues to be ensuring that all children and young people have access to a positive learning experience and to facilitate them, through learning, to realise their full potential and contribute to Ireland's social, economic and cultural development. How we achieve this, consistent with our values, is important. We place children and young people at the centre of education strategies and policies and value the importance of open and meaningful communication, consultation and collaboration with stakeholders within the education sector and with the wider community. We remain committed to the principles of consistent improvement, innovation, evaluation and sharing learning which will underpin evidence-informed policy development and programme delivery.

Bernie McNally
Secretary General of the Department of Education and Youth

2. Programme for Government education pillars

01

Pillar 1: Delivering a learning experience for students to highest international standards

02

Pillar 2: Break down barriers for groups at risk of exclusion

03

Pillar 3: Equip learners of all ages and abilities to participate and succeed in a changing world

04

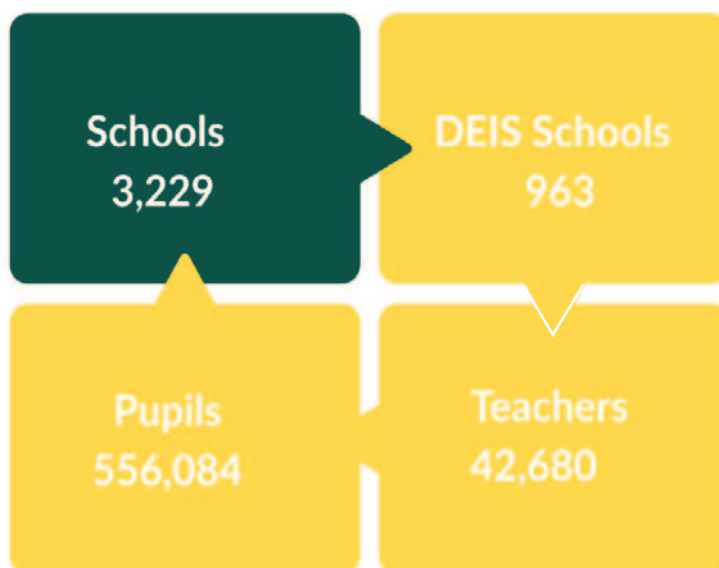
Pillar 4: Support Ireland to be a leader across a broad range of fields

05

Pillar 5: Support students and all those who work in the education sector

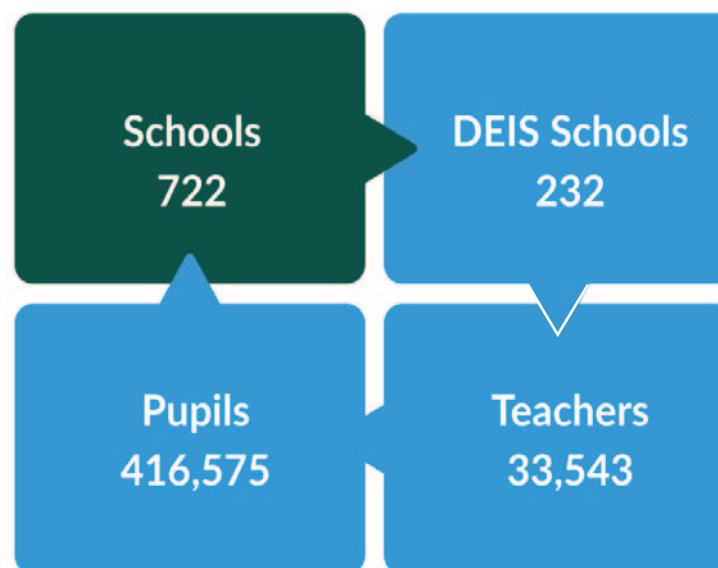
Overview of the school system in numbers

Primary



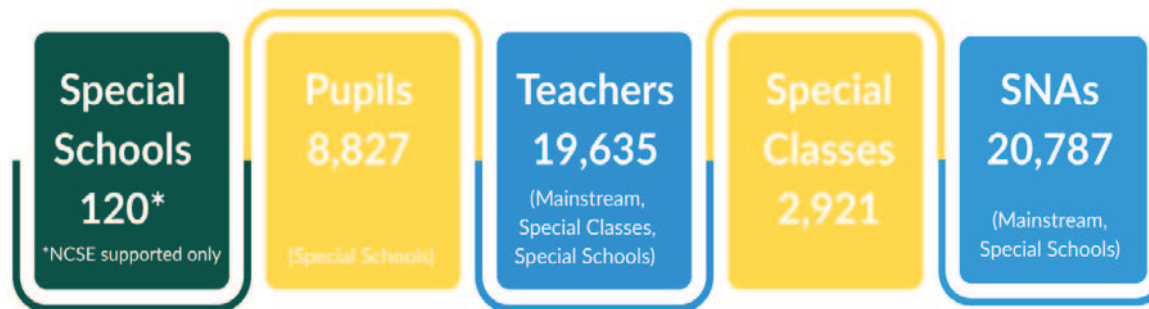
Source: Education indicators for Ireland 2024

Post-primary



Source: Education indicators for Ireland 2024

Supports for students with special educational needs



Source: SEN allocations 2023/24

3. The work of the department

Our objective is to deliver a world-class education system which breaks down barriers and ensures every child can achieve their full potential.

The department is committed to the ongoing development and improvement in the education and youth sector and achieves this by setting out and delivering a wide range of strategic goals and actions each year. In 2025 the department will drive improvements and reform across the education sector to ensure that the Irish education system delivers a high standard of learning that is accessible to all. The department will work with partners across the sector to consistently enhance provision and ensure the system is positioned to respond to future challenges.

The actions set out in this Education Plan, and their timelines, are what the department is committed to delivering in 2025. Agreeing a finite number of priorities enables the department to focus on the major challenges and on the strategic issues which will have the greatest impact in the year – and to plan for subsequent years. It also allows the department, in collaboration with aegis bodies and stakeholders, to manage the pace and scale of change.

In addition to delivering the actions in this plan, the day-to-day management and operation of the school system relies on a network of operational supports and service delivery mechanisms to ensure that the department delivers a high-quality service to all internal and external stakeholders.

These services include quality assurance, largely provided by the Inspectorate of the department. Professional development is also provided through Oide, so that educators have consistent opportunities and support to upskill. The department's National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) provides psychological and wellbeing services to children and young people.

The department is committed to ensuring that all those who have special educational needs are supported on their journey through the education system and that every child accesses the necessary support they need to help them achieve their full potential. The department wants to ensure that all children and young people are positively supported not only in academic and social development, but also in their own wellbeing. The department believes that education should provide equality of opportunity for all and supports this through programmes ranging from the DEIS programme to ensuring that school buildings are of a high standard and meet the department's climate goals.

The department is also committed to operating transparently and with accountability to the Government, the Oireachtas and the wider Irish public. On an annual basis, the department services:



- Over **430** Freedom of Information requests;



- Approximately **90** Subject Access Requests;



- Approximately **4,500** Parliamentary Questions;



- Approximately **3,000** communications / requests from elected representatives; and



- Engagement with media on a daily basis to ensure that all requested information is delivered in a timely manner.

A photograph of three students in a classroom. In the foreground, a young woman with long dark hair, wearing a black and white striped shirt, is smiling and looking towards the right. Behind her, a young Black woman with her hair in a bun, wearing a light blue shirt, is also smiling and looking towards the right. To the right, a young woman with blonde hair and glasses, wearing a plaid shirt, is partially visible, also smiling. In the background, there is a whiteboard with some faint writing and several small charts or posters hanging on the wall.

4. Education Plan actions for delivery in 2025

Pillar 1:

Delivering a learning experience for students to highest international standards



Objectives and outcomes

Ireland already outperforms many other countries in international benchmarks, including in PISA where Irish students are the best at reading in the EU and the second best in the world.

Ensuring we deliver a world-class learning experience for all students in our schools is a key objective. In a world which is rapidly changing we will ensure the curriculum equips children and young people with the skills and competencies they need to succeed.

A redeveloped primary school curriculum will be launched to help better support the needs of children, their families, their communities and society in today's world. Work is continuing to finalise the curriculum areas of Arts Education; Language (including Modern Foreign Languages); Science, Technology and Engineering Education; Social and Environmental Education; and Wellbeing.

At Junior Cycle level, we will develop a plan to issue Junior Cycle results via the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement on traditional Junior Cycle results day. Minister McEntee has already made changes to Junior Cycle grades, following feedback from teachers and students, and will act on the findings of the UL longitudinal review.

The Senior Cycle redevelopment programme is already playing a role in students reaching their full potential, including through the numbers enrolled in the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme Link modules. This school year has also seen the first modules from the new Senior Cycle Level 1 and Level 2 Learning Programmes. The department will build on this annually over the next five years as we implement the various tranches and strands of the programme. In doing so, we will continue to support teachers, schools and students.

Our focus is to be on further improvement and reform throughout the sector, to ensure that the education system meets current and future needs. This will continue to be achieved through collaboration with our partners with whom we share the common goal of ensuring the education system is able to address current and future challenges.

The Inspectorate of the department is a key component of the work undertaken to achieve this goal. Through monitoring and review on an ongoing basis, it works to improve the quality of teaching and learning for all children and young people in Irish education settings which supports the development of the education system. In 2025, the Inspectorate will conduct several national programmes of inspection in key areas including the provision for autistic children in special classes in primary schools and a programme to support the implementation of the National Traveller and Roma Education Strategy (TRES).

We also plan to implement several actions under the policy on Irish-medium education outside of the Gaeltacht in 2025. Related to this we will also publish an action plan for Irish in English-medium schools and commence its implementation. This builds on the work of a new unit, established in 2024, to support the teaching and learning of Irish in schools that function through English.

In 2025, we will commence a review of the department's Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice and roll-out new programmes for students.

Pillar 1

During 2025, we will deliver the following actions

Action	Action owner	Delivery date
1 Deliver on the redevelopment of the Senior Cycle; including the introduction of the nine Tranche 1 subject specifications to schools in September 2025 and approval of Tranche 2 subject specifications	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit	
1.1 Commence teaching of 9 Tranche 1 subject specifications for fifth years from the start of the 2025/26 school year		Q3
1.2 Approval of Tranche 2 subject specifications		Q3
1.3 Commence teacher professional learning for Tranche 2 subjects		Q4
1.4 Implement the student and school support measures in Senior Cycle Redevelopment Implementation Support Measures		Q3 and Q4
2 Review Junior Cycle grade bands	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit	
2.1 Complete review of Junior Cycle grade bands		Q1
2.2 Implement any changes necessary in a timely manner		Q2
3 Advance curriculum redevelopment at primary level, including the introduction of Modern Foreign Languages	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit	
3.1 Approval of curriculum specifications by the NCCA and the Minister		Q2
3.2 Publication and launch of the specifications		Q3
3.3 Preparation of guidance on whole school planning		Q3
3.4 Ongoing engagement and communication with stakeholders		Q1-Q4
4 Develop a targeted initiative (building on the school excellence fund step up programme) to support well performing schools to step up further	Inspectorate	Q4
5 Conduct a national programme of 2,800 inspection and advisory activities in Early Learning and Care (ELC) settings, primary and post-primary schools. Targets include inspections of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 600 Early Learning and Care centres ■ 900 Primary schools ■ 670 Post-primary schools ■ 100 Special Focus Areas ■ 140 schools offering the Summer Programme ■ Research and Development 	Inspectorate	Q1-Q4
6 Publish a formal inspection policy that includes the inspection and advisory functions of the Inspectorate	Inspectorate	Q2

Action		Action owner	Delivery date
7	Finalise the policy on Irish-medium education outside of the Gaeltacht	Aonad um Oideachas Gaeltachta	
	7.1 Submit draft policy on Irish-medium education outside the Gaeltacht to the Minister		Q2
	7.2 Publish policy on Irish-medium education		Q3
	7.3 Begin implementation of the policy on Irish-medium education outside of the Gaeltacht in collaboration with stakeholders		Q3
8	Publish an action plan for Irish in English-medium schools and commence its implementation	Aonad Gaeilge um Scoileanna Meán Bhéarla	
	8.1 Submit draft plan for Irish in English-medium schools to the Minister		Q2
	8.2 Publish the plan on Irish in English-medium schools		Q3
	8.3 Begin implementation of the plan in collaboration with stakeholders		Q4
9	Develop a proposal for a fund to support new collaborative initiatives between clusters of schools, fostering creativity, innovation and shared learning building on the experience of the previous Schools Excellence Fund	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit	
	9.1 Development of a draft proposal for consideration as part of the estimates process		Q3
	9.2 Continue to deliver existing initiatives that encourage collaboration between clusters of schools, fostering creativity, innovation and shared learning		Q4
10	Implement actions to encourage physical activity in the school setting, in the context of Healthy Ireland and promoting 60 minutes of physical exercise in the full day	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit Planning and Building Unit	
	10.1 Implement the second year of the Pilot Programme on Physical Activity in Teaching and Learning		Q3
	10.2 Commence review of the Pilot Programme		Q4
	10.3 Continue to deliver sports halls and outdoor hard play areas for all new school buildings as part of the overall School Building Programme		Q4
	10.4 Complete a national Energy and Condition Survey of existing school accommodation as part of the assessment for modernisation requirements of existing sports halls		Q4
11	Implement necessary actions to address issues identified through the UL Longitudinal Study in order to achieve continuous improvement in the Junior Cycle	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit	
	11.1 Consider and initiate a response to the findings of the UL Longitudinal Study on enactment of the Framework for Junior Cycle informed by the advice of the NCCA. This will include areas requested for examination by the department, and NCCA advancing this work in close cooperation with the department and other key agencies.		Q4
	11.2 Develop a plan to issue Junior Cycle results via the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement on traditional Junior Cycle results day		Q4
12	Introduce the Senior Cycle Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) specification for Leaving Certificate Applied students supported by appropriate Teacher Professional Learning provision	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit	
	12.1 Work with the NCCA and the HSE in development of resources to support teaching and learning		Q3
	12.2 Liaise with colleagues / Oide as needed in relation to Oide's planned provision of teacher professional learning		Q3

	Action	Action owner	Delivery date
13	Deliver the State examinations for 2025	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit	
	13.1 Support the State Examinations Commission (SEC) in delivery of State Examinations in 2025, including oral, practical and written examinations and timely delivery of results taking account of the commencement of the gradual return to normal as announced		Q3
	13.2 Engage with Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS) and relevant stakeholders, as appropriate		Q3
14	Implement the following actions under the Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy 2024-2033	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit	
	14.1 Establishment of oversight group		Q1
	14.2 Host literacy, numeracy and digital literacy forum		Q1
	14.3 Development of parental supports		Q4
	14.4 Development of subject leaflets for the transition from primary to post-primary school and rollout to schools		Q4
	14.5 Support the implementation of the National Counter Disinformation Strategy by improving teacher awareness of curricular area supports to recognise and counter disinformation in primary and post-primary schools	Digital Policy for Schools	Q4
	14.6 Provide professional learning for teachers in primary and post-primary schools in tandem with the evolution of digital literacy, including AI	Digital Policy for Schools	Q4
15	Promote the further expansion of Transition Year (TY) participation working towards all students in all schools having the option to participate and identify the barriers that might prevent take-up by students	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit	
	15.1 Working with schools, identify barriers preventing students opting to participate in TY including school place or capacity challenges, focusing on achieving inclusion of all students including those whose participation may be under-represented and in particular students with special educational needs		Q4
	15.2 Working with students, identify the motivations or preferences of students who choose to opt to progress directly to fifth year/LC programmes on completion of Junior Cycle		Q4
	15.3 Work with schools to ensure that there is transparency in regard to how TY places are allocated at school level		Q4 with work on the actions to continue into 2026
	15.4 Develop proposals at a policy and operational level to further expand TY participation cross all schools		Q4 with work on the actions to continue into 2026

	Action	Action owner	Delivery date
16	Advance the consideration of Senior Cycle Pathways through the NCCA, including the integration or reimagining of existing programmes	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit	
	16.1 NCCA to work with selected schools to develop ideas and test aspects of their proposals for models of flexible pathways in senior cycle		Q4
17	Develop technical support pilot models for schools	Digital Policy for Schools	
	17.1 Engage with stakeholders through the Digital Strategy Consultative Group regarding the pilots		Q2
	17.2 Commence pilots through identifying participating schools, and procuring services as appropriate		Q2-Q3
	17.3 Report on findings and recommendations for implementation in 2026		Q4
18	Publish the evaluation report on the School Excellence Fund Digital and STEM and disseminate relevant findings and learnings to the wider system	Digital Policy for Schools	Q2
19	Commence planning for a Festival of Digital Learning for 2026 to showcase best practice on the use of digital technologies in schools for all schools and ITE providers	Digital Policy for Schools	Q4
20	Support teachers and promote coding and computational thinking in line with the new Primary Curriculum Framework	Digital Policy for Schools	
	20.1 Provision of workshops and projects such as the National Coding Summer Course. Roll out 28 courses planned across education centres, to circa 430 teachers		Q3-Q4
	20.2 Promote EU Code Week activities – through face-to-face workshops and an online webinar for primary teachers focusing on computational thinking and coding		Q4
	20.3 Support the BRICS Project – Building a Real-World Integrated Curriculum through STEM focusing on culturally responsive computational thinking. 14 schools will be engaged, reaching 28 teachers and over 400 pupils		Q2-Q4
21	Commence a review of the department's Wellbeing Policy and Framework for Practice and roll-out new programmes for students	NEPS	
	21.1 Commence Wellbeing Policy and Implementation Plan Review		Q3
	21.2 Roll-out new Neart programme in post-primary schools		Q1-Q4
22	Develop an inspection programme to quality assure provision for children attending privately operated Early Learning and Care settings in receipt of the home tuition grant	Inspectorate	Q4

	Action	Action Owner	Delivery date
23	Publish an annual Inspectorate report for 2024	Inspectorate	Q3
24	Deliver on the National Development Plan to provide school places and upgrade existing infrastructure with a particular focus on ensuring provision for students with special education needs and adding school place capacity in line with housing development and demand within the constraints of available funding	Planning and Building Unit	Q4
25	Continue to ensure that the principles of Universal Design and Inclusion underpin the design of all new school accommodation, including through the review and updating of School Design Guides on an ongoing basis	Planning and Building Unit	Q4
26	Update contingency plans to deal with significant storms, better equipping schools to respond	Schools Financial Unit	
	26.1 Update "Be Winter Ready"		Q4
27	Develop and deliver teacher professional learning frameworks to support the roll-out of new or updated curricula and department policy at primary and post-primary level, including priority areas such as the Primary Curricular Framework (PCF), Senior Cycle Reform, SPHE and Child Protection	Teacher Professional Learning and Early Years	Q4
28	Implement certain actions under Languages Connect, Ireland's Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education 2017–2026	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit	
	28.1 Continue to pilot foreign language upskilling programmes for primary teachers		Ongoing
	28.2 Manage the Say Yes to Languages module at primary level		Q3
	28.3 Increase the number of Foreign Language Assistants available to schools		Q4
29	Work with school leaders to ensure schools are mobile phone-free zones to protect student wellbeing and learning	Digital Policy for Schools	
	29.1 Publish guidelines for primary schools to ban pupil mobile phones during the school day		Q3
	29.2 Publish guidelines for post-primary schools to restrict the use of students' mobile phones during the school day		Q3
	29.3 Publish a circular for post-primary schools on the funding to be provided for secure mobile phone storage solutions		Q3
	29.4 Establish a procurement mechanism for post-primary schools for secure mobile phone storage solutions		Q3
	29.5 Undertake a consultation with children, young people and parents/guardians to assess the impact of the ban/restriction		Q3 2026

A photograph showing four students and a teacher gathered around a wooden table, focused on a project. The teacher, a woman with blonde hair and glasses, is leaning over the table. Three students, two girls and one boy, are also looking intently at the project. They are working with a white LEGO Technic baseplate that has various colored bricks and wires attached. A yellow tray with compartments of orange, blue, and red LEGO bricks is on the table. A laptop with 'ASUS' and 'chromebook' logos is open to the right. The background shows a classroom setting with a blue bulletin board and a whiteboard.

Pillar 2:

Using the education system to break down barriers for groups at risk of exclusion

Objectives and outcomes

We want to ensure that all children and young people can reach their full potential. We will do this by consistently placing an emphasis on ensuring that all those who have special educational needs are supported on their journey through the education system and that every child can access the necessary support they need to help them achieve their full potential.

Our objective is to ensure that all children and young people are positively supported not only in academic and social development, but also in their own wellbeing. We know there are challenges faced by students and the wider school community and we work to address these through NEPS and other support services. The services support schools to provide strong universal support at the level of whole school and classroom, more targeted support for some children and young people who may be at risk, and more individualised support for those with greatest need.

Additional funding secured in Budget 2025 allows for additional Special Education Teachers and Special Needs Assistant (SNA) posts. It also allows for the opening of new special classes in mainstream schools and additional special school places. This will allow for the provision of new placements for children with special educational needs across primary, post-primary and special school settings. Specifically in 2025, we will plan for the provision of special class and special school places to meet the verified level of need identified by the NCSE with a particular emphasis on supporting special schools. We will also complete the SNA workforce development plan.

A new Education Therapy Service will be established to ensure that therapists will be based in our schools, starting with special schools, providing students with the services they need, in their school environment. Not only will this benefit students in ensuring they can receive their occupational therapy or speech and language therapy, but it will help parents who will no longer have to make arrangements to take their children to these appointments during school time.

Many students need transport to get to school. Therefore, we will work on

an ongoing basis to ensure that all children and young people that need school transport can avail of the School Transport Scheme. This support includes, on an annual basis, the transportation of over 161,600 children, including over 19,800 children with special educational needs to primary and post-primary schools throughout the country on over 9,700 dedicated transport routes. In 2025, we will conduct an evaluation of pilot projects taking place over the 2024/2025 school year and implement further pilots in the following school year as part of a phased roll-out of a revised scheme.

The Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) programme provides additional funding annually to approximately 1,200 schools. We intend to publish a new DEIS Plan by the end of 2025 which will include actions to tackle disadvantage in all schools and actions in response to the OECD 'Review of Resourcing Schools to Address Educational Disadvantage in Ireland'. We will also develop a proposal for a new DEIS+ scheme and, subject to the overall budgetary process, commence implementation in 2026.

The School Completion Programme (SCP) delivers a range of interventions to students and young people to maximise participation levels of those at risk of early school leaving. In 2025 we will create a shared service employment framework for people employed under the SCP.

We know that cross-departmental cooperation is key to achieving our objectives and therefore in 2025 we will seek to continue to improve collaboration between the Department of Education and Youth and the Department of an Taoiseach; the Department of Health; the Department of Children, Disability and Equality; the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration; the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science; the Department of Rural, Community Development and the Gaeltacht; and the Department of Social Protection to better support children, to improve school attendance and to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Pillar 2			
During 2025, we will deliver the following actions			
	Action	Action owner	Delivery date
30	Plan for the provision of special class and special school places to meet the verified level of need identified by the NCSE with a particular emphasis on supporting special schools	Special Education Forward Planning and Special Schools	Q3
31	Publish new DEIS Plan in 2025 to include actions to tackle disadvantage in all schools and respond to the OECD 'Review of Resourcing Schools to Address Educational Disadvantage in Ireland'	Social Inclusion Unit	
	31.1 Publication of consultation reports		Q3
	31.2 Hold a DEIS Forum Event on Tackling Educational Disadvantage		Q4
	31.3 Publish new DEIS Plan and accompanying action plan		Q4
32	Develop a new DEIS+ proposal	Social Inclusion Unit	
	32.1 Establish a DEIS+ design advisory group		Q1
	32.2 Refine the identification model for application to DEIS+		Q2
	32.3 Develop clustering approach to maximise benefit of the DEIS+ scheme		Q2
	32.4 Develop proposal for the DEIS+ scheme including securing funding		Q3
	32.5 Design appropriate governance and management structure for the scheme		Q4
	32.6 Commence implementation		Q4
33	Establish structures to support and monitor the implementation of the National Traveller and Roma Education Strategy (TRES)	Social Inclusion Unit	
	33.1 Publish three TRES progress reports on behalf of DE, DCED and DFHERIS		Q1, Q2 and Q4
	33.2 Initiate work of two newly appointed TRES Coordinators to support the implementation of actions within the strategy		Q1

	Action	Action owner	Delivery date
	33.3 Appoint 15 community link workers to support Traveller and Roma children and those at risk of educational disadvantage		Q4
	33.4 Support and implement a number of initiatives aimed at improving educational outcomes for Traveller and Roma children such as transition supports, creative youth programmes, digital and literacy supports		Q4
	33.5 Hold three meetings of the TRES forum (February, May and November) to facilitate policy debate between policy makers and the Traveller and Roma communities		Q1, Q2 and Q4
34	Introduce measures to improve school attendance in collaboration with Tusla Education Support Service (TESS), support and implement a National School Attendance Campaign, with a particular emphasis on students at risk of educational disadvantage	Social Inclusion Unit	
	34.1 Roll out “Anseo” to support team in 60 DEIS and non-DEIS schools in the 2024/25 school year. A new webinar focused on implementing the MDMTSS will be available to all schools together with additional webinars showcasing exemplars of proven good practice		Q3 commence and ongoing throughout the 2025/26 school year
	34.2 Promote the increased (target is 25% increase in use over the 2024/25 number) use of school attendance clinics in 2025 where the EWO meets with parents in collaboration with school leadership and other personnel as appropriate		Q3 start of the 2025/26 school year
	34.3 In the 2024/25 school year TESS will develop a national media campaign promoting school attendance		Q3 start of the 2025/26 school year
	34.4 Publish revised guidelines to schools on developing a code of behaviour, to support schools to develop codes of behaviour which foster a school culture of belonging, positive behaviour and improved attendance		Throughout the 2025/26 school year
	34.5 The Inspectorate will conduct a number of inspections in schools that are in the DEIS programme that will evaluate the effectiveness of the DEIS action planning process in improving school attendance	Inspectorate	Q4 commence
	34.6 Commence work on a scoping project to deliver real-time attendance data for better decision-making and intervention	Social Inclusion Unit	Q4
	34.7 Continue to invest in the School Completion Programme and in the Home School Community Liaison Scheme. Improve planning between the School Completion Programme and the range of supports available through the non-formal education sector in youth so that the range of young people’s needs during school days, school holidays and weekends can be best planned for and met		Q4

	Action	Action owner	Delivery date
35	Create a shared service employment framework for people employed under the School Completion Programme (SCP) to move towards a more robust and sustainable governance model of employment which will support the vision to improve the education experience and outcomes for children and young people at risk of early school leaving and educational disadvantage	Social Inclusion Unit	
	35.1 Complete the business case and feasibility study including costings to verify the ETB as the preferred employer option		Q2
	35.2 Complete organisational design including roles and responsibilities to enable transfer		Q3
	35.3 Commence data capture for SCP staff to enable transfer to ESBS payroll		Q4
36	Publish the action plan and report of the work of the implementation group for the review of out of school education provision and commence the implementation plan to ensure every child has the opportunity to thrive and experience success in education	Social Inclusion Unit	
	36.1 Establish structures to support the delivery of the action plan as outlined in the plan		Q3
	36.2 Commence delivery to timeframes as outlined in the plan		Q4
37	Revise the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 to strengthen statutory supports for young children, including bringing children under the age of 6 attending primary school within its scope to ensure earlier intervention	Social Inclusion Unit	
	37.1 Seek Government approval to draft heads of bill		Q3
38	Roll out free schoolbooks to all recognised primary, special and post-primary schools in the Free Education Scheme	Social Inclusion Unit	
	38.1 Publish updated guidance for the free schoolbooks scheme in primary and special schools and in post-primary schools to include Senior Cycle years		Q1
	38.2 Issue funding to primary, special and post-primary schools		Q1
	38.3 Establish a Dynamic Purchasing System for post-primary schoolbooks and provide appropriate resources to support procurement of schoolbooks in post-primary schools		Q2
39	Improve collaboration between the Department of Education and Youth, and the Department of Health; the Department of Children, Disability and Equality; the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration; the Department of an Taoiseach; the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, the Department of Rural, Community Development and the Gaeltacht and the Department of Social Protection to better support children, to improve school attendance and to improve outcomes for children and young people	Social Inclusion Unit	
	39.1 Establish an interdepartmental group to better align programmes across government which target children and young people at risk of educational disadvantage		Q1
	39.2 Agree work programme through child-centred design approach		Q2

	Action	Action owner	Delivery date
40	Deliver the 2025 Summer Programme and ensure all schools have the opportunity to take part	Special Education Operations, Governance and Litigation	Q3
41	Implement the recommendations of the School Transport Scheme Review on a phased basis	School Transport Unit	
	41.1 Conduct an evaluation of pilot projects in 24/25 school year to inform further roll-out of a revised scheme		Q1
	41.2 Implement GIS technology to plan for the additionality required on the scheme for 26/27 school year and enhance its capability on an ongoing basis to plan for an expanded school transport scheme		Q3
	41.3 Implement further pilots in 25/26 school year as part of a phased roll-out of a revised scheme, subject to available resources		Q3
	41.4 Implement digital mapping technology to assist in route planning and efficiency		Q2
	41.5 Contract award for eTicketing, to improve customer service data on scheme usage and to assist in planning for an expanded scheme		Q4
42	Undertake the necessary preparatory work and stakeholder engagement in 2025 in relation to facilitating a common application system being put in place for a number of pilot areas for September 2026 enrolment process at post-primary level	Planning and Building Unit	Q4
43	Oversee the commencement, management and delivery of the three projects under the Shared Island initiative on Tackling Educational Disadvantage in collaboration with the Northern Ireland Department of Education	International Unit	
	43.1 Manage and support the three projects under the Shared Island initiative, Creative Connections, TREX and Tackling Educational Disadvantage in collaboration with the Department of Education (NI)		Q1-Q4
	43.2 Ongoing positive and fruitful engagement with the Shared Island Unit in the Department of the Taoiseach to identify future possible shared island projects		
44	Oversee the management and delivery of the Work Programme for the North-South Ministerial Council	International Unit	
	44.1 Host a North-South Ministerial Council Ministerial Educational Sectoral in autumn 2025		Q1-Q4
	44.2 Attend North-South Ministerial Council working groups and continue engagement and cooperation between both Departments of Education under the joint work programme		

	Action	Action owner	Delivery date
45	Support the Department of Social Protection to roll out the hot school meals programme through participation in the interdepartmental working group and associated subgroups on School Meals Programme	Major Operations	
	45.1 Assist with putting in place sustainable procurement solutions including waste management and delivery		Q2
	45.2 Consider suitability of school infrastructure and plan for future facilities		Q1
	45.3 Engage in discussion on nutritional value of meals		Q3
	45.4 Advise on health and safety related issues		Q2
	45.5 Actively participate in review of programme		Q4
46	Conclude a national inspection programme of provision for autistic children in special classes in primary schools	Inspectorate	Q2
47	Ensure all patron bodies have reviewed the admissions policies to schools with special education classes	Special Education Unit	Q4
48	Conduct a national programme of inspections to support the implementation of the National Traveller and Roma Education Strategy	Inspectorate	Q2
49	Publish the second Implementation and Evaluation Report for Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying and support implementation of the Bí Cineálta procedures to prevent and address bullying behaviour in schools	Parents and Learners Unit	Q3
50	Establish a National Youth Sector Reference Group (NYSRG), incorporating strong mechanisms for young people to influence decision-making and including expert and sectoral perspectives and those representing cohorts of young people who experience particular barriers to participation	Youth Affairs	
	50.1 Identify gaps in the current service model, ensuring relevance of youth services to the identified and expressed needs of young people and to future proof youth service delivery in an evolving landscape of being a young person in Ireland		Q4
	50.2 Enable young people to influence decision making regarding the development of youth services through engagement with existing consultative structures		Q4
	50.3 Establish a representative group of relevant departments and state agencies that provide support or funding to youth services, to achieve greater cooperation, coherence and, where appropriate, integration of services		Q4
51	Continue to support the work of the Prison Education Taskforce	Inspectorate	
	51.1 Monitor and report on an annual basis on education provision in Oberstown Children Detention Campus		Q4
52	Complete the Periodic Critical Review of the NCSE	Governance and Risk Unit	Q4

Pillar 3:

Equipping learners of all ages and abilities to participate and succeed in a changing world



Objectives and outcomes

The department provides strategic leadership to support the delivery of the right systems and infrastructure across the education sector. This can best be achieved through successful collaboration with our valued partners in the sector.

We recognise the importance of research, data and evidence at every stage of the policy cycle. The department established the Research, Policy and Practice Steering Group (RPPSG) in early 2023, with the overall aim of integrating research, data and evidence into policy design, implementation and evaluation. The RPPSG is made up of representatives from policy units across the department, as well as research leads from five aegis bodies (Educational Research Centre, National Council for Special Education,

Teaching Council, State Examinations Commission, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment) and the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science. In 2025, the RPPSG will establish a dedicated research section within the department and commence the preparation of a research strategy.

We intend to deliver important actions that will support students transitioning through education and also advance specific actions that will support our commitments towards sustainable development, review career guidance provision and provide guidance on artificial intelligence in teaching and learning for teachers and school leaders.

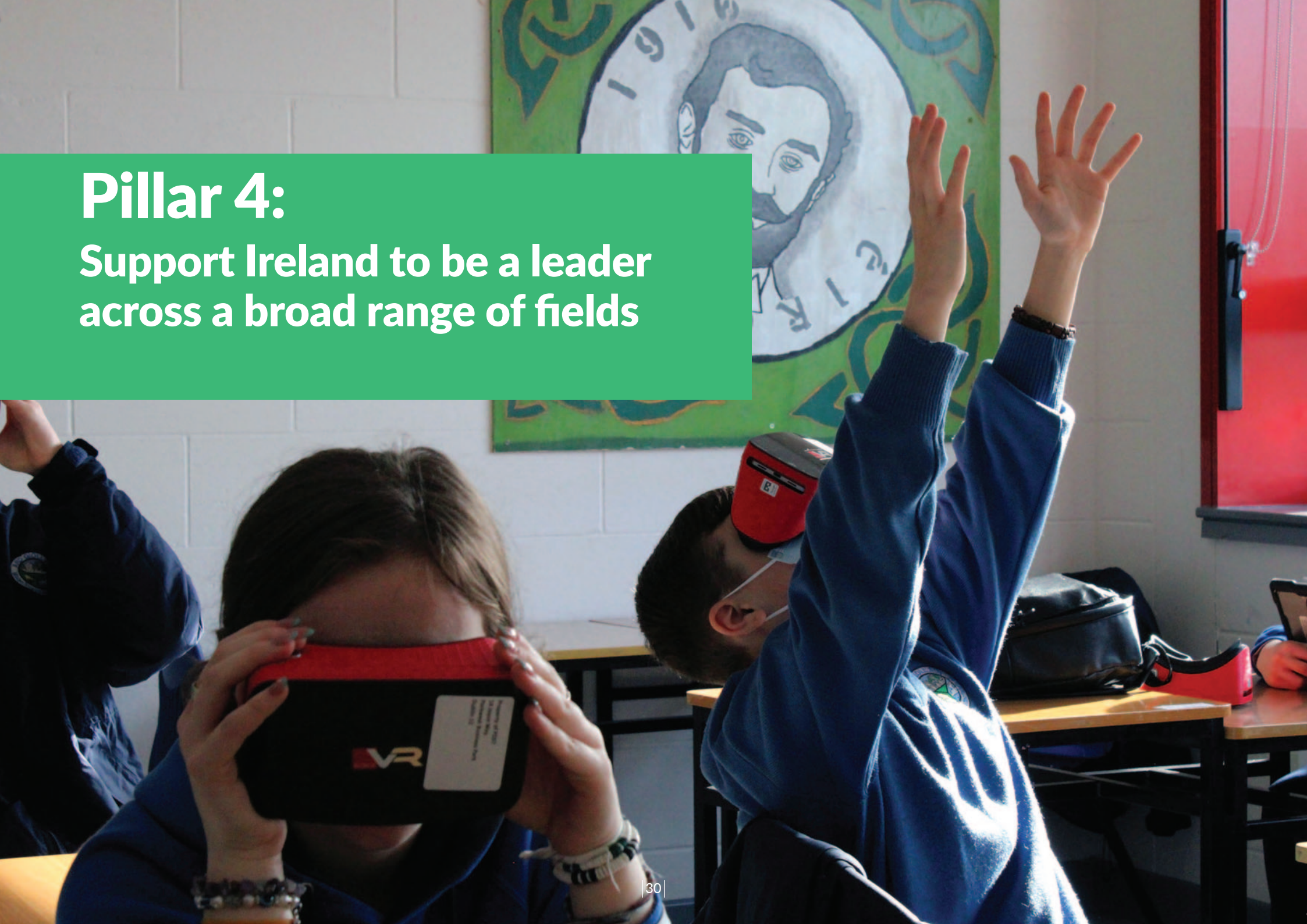


Pillar 3			
During 2025, we will deliver the following actions			
	Action	Action owner	Delivery date
53	Publish the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Review report	Special Education Operations, Governance and Litigation	Q2
54	Improve transitions from pre-school to primary, from primary to second level and from post-primary to higher and further education or to the world of work	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit	
	54.1 Work collaboratively with the Department of Children, Equality and Disability to progress the development of a draft transitions policy statement for public consultation to support effective transitions into, within and from Early Learning and Care settings to primary school		Q4
	54.2 Engage with the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research and Innovation and Science, and relevant stakeholders, to identify next steps in relation to transitions and appropriate alignment with the current Senior Cycle Pathways work by the NCCA		Q2
55	Improve pathways into higher and further education, and employment, including through a focus on career guidance and work placement	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit	
	55.1 Work collaboratively with schools to facilitate sharing of experience across schools in regard to aspects of Transition Year (TY) programmes such as access to FET/HE/workplace “taster” or “sampling” experiences		Q4
56	Work with education stakeholders and advocacy groups to implement, on an ongoing basis, ‘Understanding Behaviours of Concern and Responding to Crisis Situations Guidelines for Schools in Supporting Students’	Special Education Policy	
	56.1 Examine further enhancements to the work of education and advocacy groups implementing this strategy		Q2
	56.2 Work with the NCSE, NEPS and the Inspectorate to enhance oversight of the use of restraint in schools to ensure that procedures used in schools are in line with the processes outlined in the guidelines		Q3
57	Implement certain actions under the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) to 2030 strategy	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit	
	57.1 Publish a second progress report on the implementation of ESD to 2030		Q3
	57.2 Host the Annual ESD Stakeholder Forum		Q4
	57.3 Promote the “Managing School Grounds for Biodiversity” training course developed in collaboration with Biodiversity Ireland in accordance with the recommendation of the Citizens Assembly on Biodiversity Loss		Q1
	57.4 Manage the ESD to 2030 funding scheme to support implementation of ESD to 2030 by organisations and schools		Q2 and Q3

	Action	Action owner	Delivery date
58	Review of career guidance provision and conduct a mapping exercise to identify gaps and areas for improvement	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit	Q2
59	Develop and publish guidance on the use of AI in teaching and learning for teachers and school leaders	Digital Policy for Schools	
	59.1 Develop and publish a Version 2 which will take account of developments in AI and feedback from school leaders and teachers		Q4
60	Finalise and publish the OECD research on the impact of digital technology in education on learning	Digital Policy for Schools	Q2
61	Expand and enhance resources and TPL to support the safe and ethical use of the internet by children and young people	Digital Policy for Schools	
	61.1 Ongoing engagement between Webwise and Coimisiun na Meán (CnM) to integrate CnM resources, and any relevant CnM information re regulation, Frameworks, guidance or other such materials, into relevant content		Q3
	61.2 Promote Safer Internet Day and Safer Internet Ambassador Programme for students		Q1
62	Consult with children and young people on guidance for schools to support the establishment of student councils in post-primary and primary schools and to implement a number of actions in the Student Participation in Implementation Plan 2024-2026	Parents and Learners Unit	
	62.1 Establish a working group which would include the education partners and the ISSU to develop the guidance		Q2
	62.2 Establish a child and youth advisory group to advise on the consultation process and the guidance		Q3
	62.3 Run a consultation process with a diverse range of children and young people, including those with special educational needs and Traveller and Roma children and young people		Q4
	62.4 Publish a literature review of international best practice		Q4
63	Oide TiE to engage with the NCSE to advise on provision of relevant supports and guidance for the use of technology to support inclusive practice	Digital Policy for Schools	Q4
64	Work towards the introduction of a mandatory student placement in a SEN setting, supported by appropriate modules, as a universal part of initial teacher education	Initial Teacher Education and Teaching Council	
	64.1 Teaching Council survey across all ITE providers to gain a deeper understanding of the current landscape of school placement provision in special education settings		Q2
	64.2 Work with the Teaching Council to develop a guidance note to be issued to HEIs		Q2
	64.3 HEIs to introduce assessed placements in SEN settings		Q3 2026

Pillar 4:

Support Ireland to be a leader
across a broad range of fields



Objectives and outcomes

The department will continue to place excellence and innovation at the centre of all activities to ensure that the management and operation of our school system is supported and facilitated to provide the best possible outcomes for students. The department strives to provide high-quality services to all our internal and external stakeholders. Through the department, our aegis bodies, and partners, we are dedicated to ensuring the effective and efficient delivery of these services.

To support this commitment, we have ongoing development and continuous improvement programmes aimed at providing exceptional customer service to those who use our services, while also enhancing our operations and maximising value for money. In 2025, we will complete the 2024 Customer Service summary report, develop a Customer Service Liaison Officer network across the department and lead the programme of customer service research. We will take steps to improve communication between the department and schools in line with the Customer Charter.

To ensure efficient management of schools, we provide a range of supports and guidance to schools. We work closely with the education partners

including representatives of school management, students, staff, parents, and patron bodies in order to support the running of schools. In addition, we provide oversight to our aegis bodies which support the sector.

We will also continue to focus on implementing the STEM education policy statement delivering key actions such as continuing to fund initiatives including Young Scientist, Scifest and Science Blast. We will also partner with Research Ireland on their Discover Programme to seek to embed STEM even further into our schools and learning.

We will also implement some important actions under the Digital Strategy for Schools to 2027. It is important that we put in place the necessary framework to do this right and therefore we will be establishing consultative group and industry group to facilitate engagement and feedback during implementation of this strategy to ensure that we can review and update the current implementation plan with a view to ensuring that we are best placed to execute the remaining parts of the strategy over the next two years.

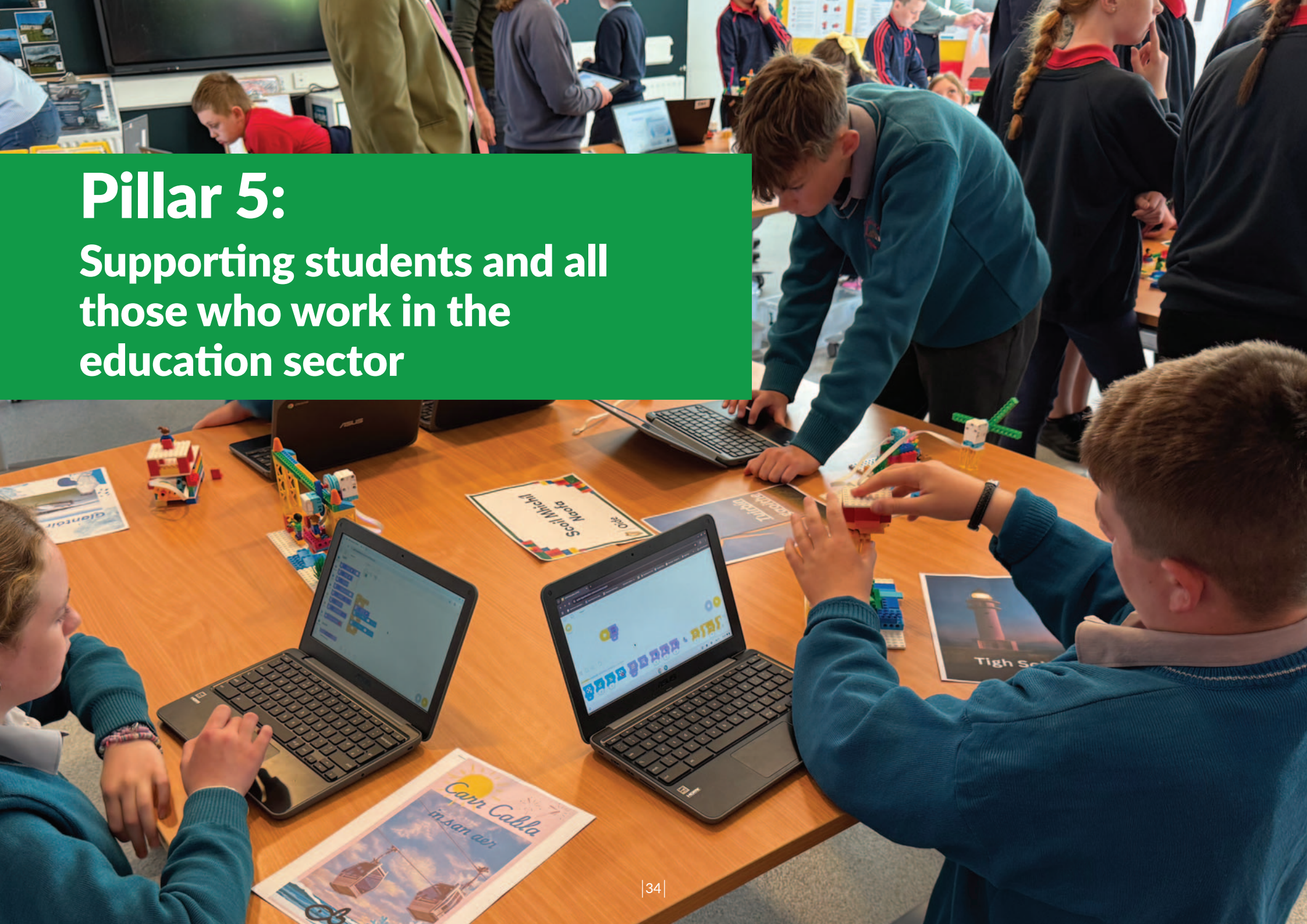


Pillar 4			
During 2025, we will deliver the following actions			
	Action	Action owner	Delivery date
65	Publish new Statement of Strategy for the department	Strategy and Development Unit	Q2
66	Continue to implement key plans including the STEM Education Policy Statement 2017-2026	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit	
	66.1 Funding for organisations such as Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition, Scifest and Science Blast		Ongoing to Q4
	66.2 Partnership with Research Ireland to support education and public engagement projects in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) across the country through their Discover Programme		Q4
	66.3 Explore the development of a national accreditation framework for whole school culture change at primary and post-primary levels, to address gender balance, equity and inclusion actions		Commence Q3
	66.4 Publication of progress report		Q2
67	Progress the Digital Strategy for Schools to 2027 Implementation Plan	Digital Policy for Schools	
	67.1 Establish Consultative Group and Industry Group to facilitate engagement and feedback during implementation		Q2
	67.2 Review implementation plan and produce updated plan for final stage of the strategy		Q4
68	Publish Organisational Capability Review Report and Implementation Plan	Strategy and Development Unit	Q4
69	Lead the implementation of actions contained within the Customer Service Implementation Plan 2024-2026 and meet the commitments under the Customer Service Strategy 2024-2026 and Customer Charter	Minister and Secretary General Programme Office	
	69.1 Complete Customer Service Summary Report 2024		Q2
	69.2 Support the improvement of telephone call management across the department		Q3
	69.3 Develop Customer Service Liaison Officer network across the department		Q4
	69.4 Lead the programme of customer service research (complete year 1 in Q2 and commence year 2 in Q3)		Q2/Q3
	69.5 Improve communication with schools and ensure all calls and communications from schools are dealt with in a prompt manner in line with the Customer Charter		Ongoing

	Action	Action owner	Delivery date
70	Submit draft Education Plan 2026 to Minister	Corporate Programme Office	Q4
71	Submit half year progress reports to Government on implementation of Education Plan 2025	Corporate Programme Office	Q2 and Q4
72	Lead and manage the department's preparations for Ireland's EU Presidency in 2026, including increasing ministerial and senior official engagement on EU issues and identifying education priorities for the Presidency	International Unit	Over the course of 2025 in preparation for the Presidency from July to December 2026
	72.1 Jointly lead and manage the Steering Committee between the Department of Education and Youth and the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science on presidency planning and the successful ongoing collaboration and engagement between the departments		
	72.2 Represent the department at internal and external presidency planning meetings		
	72.3 Attend EU Council, EU Working Groups and other groups		
	72.4 Proactively manage resources, including staffing resources, in Dublin and Brussels		
	72.5 Continue to build an excellent working rapport with our Presidency Trio partners Greece and Lithuania		
	72.6 Manage and deliver on EU bilateral relations, including incoming visits and visits to the EU Institutions		
73	Work with the UK Department for Education to agree education cooperation priorities in the context of the Leaders' Summit in 2025 and enhance cooperation with the UK, including the Devolved Administrations	International Unit	
	73.1 Work with the UK Department for Education to agree education cooperation priorities following the Leaders' Summit in Spring 2025 and enhance cooperation with the UK, including the Devolved Administrations		Q1-Q4
	73.2 Continue bilateral cooperation and in our joint work under the CTA Education Memorandum of Understanding with the UK Department for Education		
	73.3 Plan visit of UK Secretary of State for Education to Ireland in 2025		

Pillar 5:

Supporting students and all those who work in the education sector



Objectives and outcomes

To support the provision of quality education, the department also invests in providing funding for ongoing support and professional upskilling opportunities for educators to ensure that our teaching profession remains of a high standard and that teachers are supported to implement curricular changes. In 2025 we will develop the Initial Teacher Education Policy Statement implementation plan for 2025 and 2026.

We are fortunate in Ireland to have some of the highest calibre teachers in the world. We will increase investment in training and professional learning. Continuous professional development (CPD) is also provided through the national network of education support centres and appropriate groups, bodies and institutions who are empowered to design, develop and deliver CPD programmes. The department also provides a number of teacher education programmes through higher education institutions. In addition, a range of leadership supports is available for principals and senior management, to support them in their roles. School leaders play an important role in nurturing some of the most vulnerable children and young people to achieve their potential. In recognition of this, the department places a priority on access to leadership CPD programmes for school leaders of schools in the DEIS programme.

The Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) scheme and the School Completion Programme (SCP) are two key supports in the DEIS programme. The HSCL scheme promotes partnership between parents, teachers and community family support services, with a view to supporting improved attendance, participation and retention. The SCP delivers a range of local interventions in disadvantaged communities which support their retention of young people in education. We will continue to invest in the HSCL scheme and in the SCP to tackle educational disadvantage in our schools.

We know that the environment in which students receive their education is crucially important. Extensive work is done through the School Building Programme to add capacity to schools and to develop and upgrade school facilities across the country for the approximately 1,000,000 students and 100,000 staff that learn and work in our schools every day. In 2025 we will deliver on the National Development Plan (NDP) to provide school places and upgrade existing infrastructure with a particular focus on ensuring provision for students with special education needs and adding school place capacity in line with housing development.

On an annual basis, through our capital investment programme, we deliver an average of between 150 to 200 school building projects. There are circa. 1,300 projects in the school building programme pipeline at any one time. All of these projects support our climate commitments. In 2025, we will implement actions to improve energy efficiency and emissions in the school sector in accordance with the School Sector Technical Climate Action Roadmap.

We provide a range of employee and corporate services for our client organisations including primary, post-primary and community and comprehensive schools, and education and training boards, to ensure efficient and secure operations across the sector. Our portfolio of services includes human resource management, payroll, pensions, finance, procurement and ICT. A contract has been awarded for a new payroll solution for teachers and we will design a system for retiree payroll and plan for management of change across the system in 2025.

We will also continue to focus on the important work of ensuring that the work of the Interdepartmental Group examining the Report of the Scoping Inquiry into historical sexual abuse in day and boarding schools run by religious orders is progressed.

Pillar 5			
During 2025, we will deliver the following actions			
	Action	Action owner	Delivery date
74	Complete the SNA workforce development plan	Special Education SNA Workforce Development	
	74.1 Review of the Circulars 30/2014 and 71/2011 on the role of the Special Needs Assistant (SNA) to ensure provisions meet the needs of children with special educational needs, reflect the SNAs role in the school community and are in line with best practice		Q3
	74.2 Review the SNA employment contract as provided in the Building Momentum public service pay agreement and which was deferred to coincide with work on the SNA Workforce Development Plan		Q3
	74.3 Develop an SNA Redeployment Scheme which will allow SNAs in posts which may no longer be required for reasons such as falling enrolments, reduced care needs or changing demographics, to be redeployed to a school which has a vacant post		Q3
75	Organise a programme of Teacher Professional Learning on 'Understanding Behaviours of Concern and Responding to Crisis Situations Guidelines for Schools in Supporting Students' with involvement from Inspectorate, NEPS and NCSE	Special Education Policy	Q1
76	Design and develop a Model of Service Delivery for an education led Education Therapy Service, all the while working collaboratively with stakeholders to improve workforce planning and ensure the service remains complementary to other children's services	Special Education Therapy and Inclusion Services	
	76.1 Engage with the NCSE and the HSE on the development of the model of service delivery and required communication links		Q3
	76.2 Secure the necessary funding to design and implement the Education Therapy Service		Q3
	76.3 Engage with relevant stakeholders to ensure adequate college places for HSCP graduates to deliver a Education Therapy Service		Q3
	76.4 Deliver an education led Education Therapy Service in special schools on a phased basis extending to special classes in mainstream schools		Q4 2025/Q1 2026 and ongoing over the development of the NTS

	Action	Action owner	Delivery date
77	Implement the Lifelong Guidance Framework and action plan	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit	
	77.1 Develop and publish an Information Note for Principals, Guidance Counsellors and Guidance Teams on Whole School Guidance		Q1
	77.2 Explore mechanisms of increasing guidance counsellor supply through provision of training programmes		Q1
	77.3 Host a Guidance Networking event with stakeholders		Q2
	77.4 Undertake a consultation process as part of research on effectiveness of the Guidance Allocation Model		Q2
	77.5 Identify and map the continuum of lifelong guidance and interconnections between services in the current lifelong-guidance system		Q2
	77.6 Work to ensure provision of guidance supports to students in special schools is delivered by appropriately trained professionals		Q4
78	Implement the Zero Tolerance actions for the Department of Education and Youth and contribute to the development of a 2025 plan	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit	
	78.1 Agree Department of Education and Youth actions for 2025 Zero Tolerance Implementation Plan being led by Cuan		Q1
	78.2 Implement actions in line with Implementation Plan		Ongoing
79	Support teaching and learning of Irish, to include the expansion and progression of the CLIL project and the development of further PE through Irish resources to support Stage 2 at primary	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit	
	79.1 Invite additional schools to participate in the CLIL project in 2025/26		Q2
	79.2 Publish resources for PE through Irish for 1st and 2nd class		Q3
80	Actions to improve quality of Teacher Professional Learning (TPL) and school leadership supports for teachers and schools, which would include: Integrated teacher feedback, survey of participants to record how their practices have changed following course	Teacher Professional Learning and Early Years	
	80.1 Map out current methodologies of how TPL supports for teachers and school leaders are reviewed and improved		Q4
	80.2 Map out current methodologies for gathering teacher feedback		Q4
	80.3 Identify a number of TPL offerings suitable for undertaking pilot pre and post-participation surveys in 2026		Q4
	80.4 Consider findings of surveys and identify further actions to empower school leadership with training, mentoring and resources		Q4

	Action	Action owner	Delivery date
81	Work with the Department of Children, Disability and Equality on supporting ELC services to implement the updated Aistear from September 2025	Teacher Professional Learning and Early Years	Q3
82	Operationalise the decision that allows teachers taking up their first contract in a viable teaching post in September 2025 become eligible for a permanent contract in September 2026	Terms and Conditions Unit	
	82.1 Commence engagement with the education partners to confirm the necessary arrangements for giving effect to the decision		Q3
	82.2 Arrangements to be published by the department once they have been agreed		Q3
83	Take additional actions to improve teacher supply, including developing a workforce plan	Teacher Supply Unit	
	83.1 Review of the main factors affecting teacher supply in Ireland		Q2
	83.2 Analysis of EU and international good practices in the planning and management of teacher workforce		Q2
	83.3 Sessions with stakeholders to develop actionable recommendations on teacher workforce planning (Recommendations will be finalised in Q1 2026)		Q4
84	Implement actions in the short, medium and long term around recruitment, retention and encouraging teachers to return	Teacher Supply Unit	
	84.1 Introduction of a STEM bursary; a €2,000 payment for the final 2-years of an ITE undergraduate programme with a 2-year post qualification teaching service commitment		Q4
	84.2 PME fee refund scheme: a €2,000 payment, subject to statutory deductions, for teachers who complete a PME in 2024 and undertake a period of teaching service in 2024/25 school year		Q3
	84.3 Expansion of upskilling programmes to increase the number of qualified post-primary teachers in specific subjects		Q3
	84.4 Measure allowing newly qualified teachers (NQTs) from outside Ireland to complete induction (Droichead) in Ireland		Q3
	84.5 Development of proposals for a tertiary degree programme for primary teaching		Q3
85	Lead the development and implementation of a number of priority actions, including in the area of workforce planning, that improve teacher supply in the short, medium and long term	Teacher Supply Unit	
	85.1 Enabling newly qualified teachers employed in primary schools to complete the Droichead process while employed on a supply panel or principal release time post		Q4
	85.2 Increasing the pool of teachers available to undertake substitute work in schools		Q3
	85.3 Continue the Teaching Transforms campaign, which promotes the teaching profession		Q3

	Action	Action owner	Delivery date
86	Support the introduction of a timebound provision to help address teacher supply challenges that will allow for induction to be completed by Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) who have obtained, outside of the State, a suitable teacher education qualification which is of an equivalent standard to programmes of ITE within the State	Initial Teacher Education and Teaching Council	Q2
87	Deliver the 2025 elements of the Teachers' Professional Journeys research project	Initial Teacher Education and Teaching Council	Q4
88	Administer the Postgraduate Diploma in Special Educational Needs	Initial Teacher Education and Teaching Council	Q4
89	Support the current rate of expansion of the Active School Flag programme and assist in implementing any new policy decisions arising from the review of the programme	Initial Teacher Education and Teaching Council	Q4
90	Develop Initial Teacher Education Policy Statement implementation plan for 2025-26 and advance the 2025 actions	Initial Teacher Education and Teaching Council	
	90.1 Consult with all relevant internal and external ITE stakeholders to finalise report of key findings on outcomes under Phase 1 Implementation Plan 2023-2024, and to identify priority actions under Phase 2	Initial Teacher Education and Teaching Council	Q2
	90.2 Prepare draft Phase 2 Implementation Plan informed by stakeholder engagement		Q3
	90.3 Convene Oversight Group to review key findings report and agree draft Phase 2 Implementation Plan 2025-2027		Q3
	90.4 Publish Phase 2 Implementation Plan 2025-2027		Q4
91	Provide advice for schools on cybersecurity, including engaging with the National Cyber Security Centre and supporting the development of digital literacy skills in cybersecurity for teachers and school leaders	Digital Policy for Schools	
	91.1 Provision of online cybersecurity course for school leaders	Digital Policy for Schools	Q3
	91.2 Expand guidance on cybersecurity policies, including templates		Q3
92	OIDE TiE to expand the range of videos and case studies of good practice and short online learning resources in digital technology in education to be made available on the Oide TiE website and promote same	Digital Policy for Schools	Q4
93	Promote the use of Oide TiE website and related websites and resources including Webwise.ie. and Scoilnet.ie	Digital Policy for Schools	Q4
94	Support the Digital Citizenship Champions programme for teachers through the Education Support Centre regional network to build capacity and provide support at a local level	Digital Policy for Schools	
	94.1 Expand programme and recruit a new cohort of teachers for the 2025-2026 school year		Q3

	Action	Action owner	Delivery date
95	Enhance and promote the AI Hub on Oide TiE website to provide information and resources on AI in education to teachers and school leaders	Digital Policy for Schools	
	95.1 Publish Guidance on AI in Education for Teaching and Learning for schools and teachers		Q2
	95.2 Review and update Guidance on AI in education for Teaching and Learning for schools and teachers		Q4
96	Publish updated Child Protection Procedures for Schools and publish an Implementation Report on the Independent Review of Child Protection	Parental Complaint/Child Protection Unit	
	96.1 Publish updated Child Protection Procedures for Schools		Q2
	96.2 Publish support materials for updated Child Protection Procedures for Schools		
	96.3 Roll out training		Q3
97	Progress the Charter Bill through the Houses of the Oireachtas, including the development of national parental and student grievance procedures	Parents and Learners Unit	
	97.1 Continue to engage with the education partners on the proposed amendments to the Charter Bill		Q3
	97.2 Establish a working group to develop national parental and student grievance procedures under the Charter Guidelines		Q3
	97.3 Progress the Charter Bill through the Dáil		Q4
98	Commence work to review Circular 32/2017 which set out the measures to be adopted by schools to reduce the cost of school uniforms and other costs. A revised circular will put a greater emphasis on reducing costs for parents	Parents and Learners Unit	
	98.1 Establish a working group, which includes representatives from the National Parents Council and the education partners, to review Circular 32/2017		Q3
	98.2 Engage with children and young people to obtain their views		Q4
99	Provide best practice guidance to schools in relation to arrangements to facilitate parental requests for children to attend school without attending religious instruction	School Governance/Planning and Building Unit	
	99.1 Undertake a consultation process with relevant stakeholders on the development of best practice guidance for primary schools in relation to providing for their diversity of enrolment, in the context of catering for children whose parents/guardians have requested their children attend school without attending religious instruction		Q3-Q4

	Action	Action owner	Delivery date
100	Provide free period products in schools	Central Policy Unit	
	100.1 Review and update costings		Q2
	100.2 Design funding and distribution mechanism		Q2
	100.3 Prepare and engage in 2026 Estimates and Budget processes		Q2
	100.4 Following stakeholder consultation, including children and young people, develop guidance for schools		Q4
101	Launch an online national survey of all primary parents and pre-school parents to determine local preferences for school type, including for multi-denominational patronage to inform potential future changes	Planning and Building Unit	Q3
102	Establish a National Convention on Education	Strategy and Development Unit	Q4
103	Drive the implementation of the new procedures for schools to open up their facilities to communities outside of school hours	Planning and Building Unit	
	103.1 Develop further actions which can be taken to improve take-up		Q4
104	Develop revised approaches to follow-through inspections that build on current approaches and strengthen school self-evaluation (SSE) and action planning for improvement	Inspectorate	Q4
105	Oversight of the Teaching Council in accordance with the DPENDPR Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016) through implementation of the Agency Governance Framework Agreement between the department and the Teaching Council	Initial Teacher Education and Teaching Council	Q4
106	Work towards implementation of the recommendations of the Periodic Critical Review of the Teaching Council	Initial Teacher Education and Teaching Council	Q4
107	Implement actions to improve energy efficiency and emissions in the school sector in accordance with the School Sector Technical Climate Action Roadmap within the constraints of available resources	Planning and Building Unit	Q4
108	Commence action research project to trial new administrative supports and arrangements for principals and boards of management to reduce the non-educational aspect of their workloads	School Leadership and Governance Renewal Project	
	108.1 Design trial and select schools		Q2
	108.2 Administrative support posts commence in trial schools		Q3
	108.3 Commence evaluation		Q3
109	Progress the Programme for Government action to increase capitation funding to schools of all types to ensure that schools can meet the elevated day-to-day running costs and reduce the financial burden on families, as part of the estimates process	Schools Financial Unit	As part of Estimates Process

	Action	Action owner	Delivery date
110	Ensure the minor works grant and the ICT grant is paid to schools	Planning and Building Unit Digital Policy for Schools	Q2
111	Launch the Climate Action Summer Works Programme	Planning and Building Unit	Q1
112	Undertake an initial review of the costs of insurance in schools and circumstances around them	Schools Financial Unit	
	112.1 Gather data on insurance costs in schools and conduct a preliminary analysis in order to understand the driving factors of those costs		Q4
	112.2 Conduct an initial review of schools' insurance needs and experiences across different sectors		Q4
	112.3 Review current practices on insurance renewal and procurement		Q4
	112.4 Engage with key stakeholders on all relevant factors		Q4
	112.5 Produce an interim review document with a view to developing recommendations for future action		Q4
113	Commence a review of leadership and professional learning supports to ensure that school management structures are adequately equipped to manage changes to the education system	School Leadership and Governance Renewal Project	
	113.1 Commence stakeholder engagement to inform the review		Q2
	113.2 Map and assess the current leadership, management, and governance structures and landscape		Q4
	113.3 Analyse existing leadership structures, roles and supports		Q4
114	Complete the passage through the Oireachtas of the Supports for Survivors of Residential Institutional Abuse Bill 2024	Redress Unit	Q2
115	Lead and support the work of the high level Inter-Departmental Group (IDG) convened to consider the recommendations of the Report of the Scoping Inquiry into historical sexual abuse in day and boarding schools run by religious orders and to draft Terms of Reference for the Commission of Investigation approved by Government. Produce report for Minister and Government.	Redress Unit	Q2
116	Take the necessary steps to support the establishment of the Commission of Investigation into historical sexual abuse in day and boarding schools	Redress Unit	Q4
117	Award contract for the Athlone payroll (non-ETB teachers) solution	ICT School Employee HCM Payroll	Q1
118	Design system for retiree payroll and plan for management of change across the system	ICT School Employee HCM Payroll	
	118.1 We commit to have the (i) system design completed for retirees and (ii) change management plan in place for all 4 sectors (retirees, primary, post-primary and non-teaching staff)		Q4

