

SCHOOL DIGITAL CHAMPION

www.schooldigitalchampion.gov.ie



Roinn Cumarsáide, Gníomhaíochas
ar son na hÉireannide & Comhshaoil
Department of Communications,
Climate Action & Environment



The School Digital Champion Programme

The Government wants to enhance the use of technology in teaching and learning. Building on the State's investment in high speed broadband connectivity, the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, in collaboration with Department of Education and Skills, is introducing this new initiative, the School Digital Champion Programme.

We invite your school and students to complete a project showing how digital technology skills can be used to make an impact in the school, local business or the wider community.

We will provide a skills training day and other exciting opportunities for students and teachers.

You must submit your completed online application form by 5pm on Thursday 27 October 2016.

The Pilot Programme

The School Digital Champion Programme was piloted during the 2015/2016 academic year. During the course of the programme, teachers and students were provided with training which included workshops on video editing, web design, coding and App design, as well as on communications and presentation skills, marketing and research.

The Department collaborated with a number of industry partners, including BT, RTÉ, Google and Vodafone in the delivery of the pilot phase. Teachers and students availed of the opportunity to visit RTÉ and Google where they took part in very exciting and informative programmes including:

- mobile journalism training session
- creative ideation
- virtual reality experience
- hands on computer science activity and
- career talks.

The School Digital Champions showcased their completed projects and received certificates of participation at the Excited Digital Learning Festival at Dublin Castle in May 2016. Video footage which captures feedback from the teachers and students in relation to their experience of the programme and its impacts is available to view on our website www.schooldigitalchampion.gov.ie.

Following the success of the pilot programme, the School Digital Champion Programme is now being rolled out to every second level school across the country.

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

Schools

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

The programme will:

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

Students

Training

We will give students the opportunity to take part in a skills training day which will provide workshops tailored to meet the needs identified in the School Digital Champion Application Form. Regional locations for training will be selected based on the level of uptake and geographical spread of applicant schools.

Students will improve key skills, including:

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

Site visits

Your students will have the opportunity to meet with leading technology companies through a series of site visits organised by the Department.

Networking

Your school will network with other School Digital Champions and receive ongoing support from the School Digital Champion project office.

Showcase projects

We will provide an opportunity to showcase all completed projects at an event in May 2017.

Teachers

Training

We will give teachers the opportunity to take part in a skills training day based on the needs identified in your School Digital Champion Application Form. Regional locations for training will be selected based on the level of uptake and geographical spread of applicant schools.

Promote hands-on learning

The projects promote project-based learning and knowledge creation through the use of new technologies.

When your students take part in the programme they will engage with technology to address real world challenges.

How do schools take part in the programme?

Your school should select a team of students (maximum 5) to act as potential leaders or role models in the development and use of digital technologies. These are called School Digital Champions and they will work to create solutions to real world challenges.

The Champions will undertake a new digital project aimed at benefitting the:

- school
- local businesses or
- the wider community.

What are the project themes?

There are 3 School Digital Champion project themes. Students must show how digital technology and skills can be used to have an impact and make a difference. Your school, working with your School Digital Champions, can select a project from one of the following **3 themes**.

Theme 1: Local enterprise

Today, less than one in four small businesses are trading online and up to 70% of online spending by Irish consumers goes overseas.

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

Theme 2: Local community

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

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

Theme 3: School-Home

Nine out of ten jobs require digital skills. Employers are placing increasing value on 21st century skills such as:

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

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

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

The School Digital Champions can also provide digital expertise and support to help students involved in other programmes and project work within the school.

Is this a competition?

No. The focus of the programme is on active participation rather than a competitive endeavour. During the pilot programme this was welcomed by teachers who stated that it was a more inclusive programme and provided for all levels of IT skills. They also found that it motivated and inspired students to share knowledge and collaborate with each other. Moreover, it introduced them to career opportunities in the digital arena.

What is the application process?

Your Principal will have received a letter from Ministers Denis Naughten and Richard Bruton inviting your school to participate in the programme.

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

Step 1. Your students apply to you to become a School Digital Champion

Inform the students about the programme. You should ask interested students to complete and give you a Nomination Form, which you can get at www.schooldigitalchampion.gov.ie

The Nomination Forms are optional but are designed to help you in selecting your School Digital Champions.

Step 2. Your school selects a team of Champions

A team of students (maximum 5) can be made up of interested students from different classes or from students in different years in your school.

It may work well to choose a team with a mix of digital knowledge and technical experience, as well as a range of organisational skills.

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

Step 3. Agree the project

When you have selected your team of Champions, the next step is to collaborate and agree on the digital project to be pursued by your school.

Step 4. Complete School Digital Champion Application Form

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

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

You must complete your online Application Form before 5pm on Thursday 27 October 2016.

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

The school should email schooldigitalchampion@dccae.gov.ie a copy of the signed Parental Consent Form for each of the students selected to be a School Digital Champion on or before 8 November 2016.

When should your project be completed?

Your project must be completed by 7 April 2017.

As part of the project, students must complete a project report describing the project, defining its rationale, aims, process and outcomes. The report should be sent to us by email at schooldigitalchampion@dccae.gov.ie by 7 April 2017.

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

You must complete your project and project report by 7 April 2017.

What is the timeline?

October 2016

- **27 October** – School to submit the completed online School Digital Champion Application Form.
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November/December 2016

- **8 November** – School to submit a copy of signed parental consent form for each School Digital Champion to schooldigitalchampion@dccae.gov.ie
 - A skills training day, consisting of various workshops, will be provided for teachers and students
 - Students commence work on their projects.
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January/February 2017

- Site visits to industry partners will be organised for School Digital Champions and their teachers.
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April 2017

- **7 April** – Closing date for completion of all projects. Completed Project Report should be submitted by email to schooldigitalchampion@dccae.gov.ie
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May 2017

- Completed projects will be showcased at a national event where the School Digital Champions will be presented with their Certificates of Participation.
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Where can I get more information?

Website: www.schooldigitalchampion.gov.ie

Email: schooldigitalchampion@dccae.gov.ie

Telephone: Paula Gormley (01) 6782025

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

