

## Where can I get more information?

**Website:** [www.schooldigitalchampion.gov.ie](http://www.schooldigitalchampion.gov.ie)

**Email:** [schooldigitalchampion@dccae.gov.ie](mailto:schooldigitalchampion@dccae.gov.ie)

**Phone:** Paula Gormley (01) 678 2025

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

All correspondence must be submitted to us by the teacher leading the team



[www.schooldigitalchampion.gov.ie](http://www.schooldigitalchampion.gov.ie)



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# 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, has introduced the School Digital Champion Programme.

We invite your school and students to complete a project showing how digital technology skills can be used to find a solution to day to day problems. This year we are encouraging students to be innovative and focus on how they could make a difference to their schools, homes, local community and local businesses in the areas of waste management, climate action, energy efficiency and digital inclusion.

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 4 October 2018.**

## The 2018/2019 Programme

The School Digital Champion Programme was launched as part of the National Digital Strategy to promote digital adoption and encourage the productive use of technology by students. During the 2017/2018 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. The training days took place in Dublin, Limerick and Cavan and were supported by PDST, DCU and LIT.

The Department collaborated with a number of industry partners, including Samsung, RTÉ, Google, Twitter, Microsoft, Kuka Robotics and Eirgrid in the delivery of the programme. Teachers and students availed of the opportunity to visit our partners where they took part in very exciting and informative programmes including:

- mobile journalism training session
- creative ideation
- virtual reality experience
- innovation workshops
- career talks

The School Digital Champions showcased their completed projects and received certificates of participation at a special event at the Carlton Hotel, Dublin Airport. Video footage was captured on the day by some of the students in relation to their experience of the programme and is available to view on our website [www.schooldigitalchampion.gov.ie](http://www.schooldigitalchampion.gov.ie).

# 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 students to become more active in their local community
- 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

Students who actively participate in the programme will have the opportunity to meet with leading technology companies through a series of site visits organised by the Department.

### Networking

Your school can 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 2019.

## Teachers

### Training

Teachers will be given the opportunity to join their students 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 programme promotes 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 4 students to act as potential leaders or role models in the development and use of digital technologies. Your school may enter a second team of 4 students with a different project. These students are called School Digital Champions and they will work to create solutions to day to day problems.

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 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.

In addition to the above examples students are also asked to consider the following areas when selecting their project. How can you use technology to make a difference in the areas of:

- reducing waste/waste management
- helping to combat climate change
- improving energy efficiency and
- digital inclusion

## Is this a competition?

No. The focus of the programme is on active participation rather than a competitive endeavour. A number of teachers who took part previously 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](http://www.schooldigitalchampion.gov.ie). Should you have any queries about the application process please contact the project office at [schooldigitalchampion@dcca.gov.ie](mailto:schooldigitalchampion@dcca.gov.ie).

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### Step 1. Your school selects a team of Champions

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A team of 4 students can be made up of interested students from different classes or different years in your school. Feedback received from participating teachers said that this programme is suitable for students in non-exam years.

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](http://www.schooldigitalchampion.gov.ie)

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### Step 2. Agree the project

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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. Projects should aim to benefit the school, local community or local business and, where possible, include an awareness of waste management, climate action, energy efficiency and digital inclusion. The School Digital Champions can also provide digital expertise and support to help students involved in other programmes and project work within the school.

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### Step 3. Complete School Digital Champion Application Form

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You can complete the School Digital Champion Application Form online at: [www.schooldigitalchampion.gov.ie](http://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 4 October 2018.**

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### Step 4. Return the School Digital Champion Parental Consent Forms to us

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The school should email a copy of the signed Parental Consent Form to [schooldigitalchampion@dcca.gov.ie](mailto:schooldigitalchampion@dcca.gov.ie) on or before 11 October 2018. A Parental Consent Form should be emailed for each student selected to be a School Digital Champion.

We will contact you if further information is required on any aspect of your application.

## When should your project be completed?

Your project must be completed by 11 April 2019.

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@dcca.gov.ie](mailto:schooldigitalchampion@dcca.gov.ie) by 11 April 2019.

You can see further guidelines on information to be included in the report at [www.schooldigitalchampion.gov.ie](http://www.schooldigitalchampion.gov.ie).

**You must complete your project and project report by 11 April 2019.**

## What is the timeline?

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### October 2018

- **04 October** – School to submit the completed online School Digital Champion Application Form.
- **11 October** – School to submit a copy of signed parental consent form for each School Digital Champion to [schooldigitalchampion@dcca.gov.ie](mailto:schooldigitalchampion@dcca.gov.ie)

Students commence work on their projects. Material from last year's workshops can be accessed on our website.

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### November/December 2018

- A skills training day, consisting of various workshops, will be provided for teachers and students
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### February/March 2019

- Site visits to industry partners will be organised for School Digital Champions and their teachers who are actively participating in the programme.
  - We will ask you to submit a progress report on your project
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### April 2019

- **11 April** – closing date for completion of all projects. Completed Project Report should be submitted by email to [schooldigitalchampion@dcca.gov.ie](mailto:schooldigitalchampion@dcca.gov.ie)
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### May 2019

- 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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