

Irish Language Plan

for

Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne

2011 – 2013

Feabhra 2011

Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne is a *Gaeltacht* school. It lies within the official boundary of *Corca Dhuibhne*, the *Gaeltacht* area of the Dingle Peninsula. The school, in accordance with its mission statement provides ‘education through the medium of the Irish language for the community of *Corca Dhuibhne*’ and in accordance with the Education Act of 1998, ‘helps maintain the Irish Language as the first language of the *Gaeltacht* community’ (Part II, 9h).

In every aspect of the life of the school, in the staffroom or in the classroom, on the playing pitch or on school tours or wherever students and staff gather within school hours, we strive to create an atmosphere in which the Irish Language can flourish as the language of instruction and of the social life of the school community.

To that end, this plan, which will be introduced on a phased basis over three years, has been developed to foster a positive Irish language environment within the *Pobalscoil*. Students, teachers, staff and parents will undertake to work together to implement the plan so that it will enhance the education of our students and assure a future for the Irish Language in the *Corca Dhuibhne Gaeltacht*. We ask you the teachers, all sport coaches and trainers and all involved in any way in extra-curricular activities, and especially the students, for your help and support in fostering this positive learning environment for the Irish Language.

We recognise that the students are at the heart of this important development and to that end we will liaise closely with the Student Council to encourage them to be responsible for their own language and to be proud to speak it. It is of benefit to each student to have a positive attitude to education through the medium of Irish and we would be most grateful to the parents who will foster such an attitude in their children.

We are most grateful to the staff, the students, the parents and to each individual in the school community who helped to foster the particular positive attitude evident in the school since its opening in September 2007.

We look forward to your co-operation. *Ní neart go cur le chéile* - There is strength in unity.

Board of Management
Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne.

Language Policy

January 2011

The Irish Language Policy recognises that *Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne* should be empowered to provide an education of the highest standard through the medium of the Irish Language in order to assist in the maintenance of the Irish Language in the *Corca Dhuibhne Gaeltacht*.

To that end:

- All official school activities e.g. Board of Management activities, public meetings/assemblies and advertising/signage will normally be in Irish.
- Irish will be the language of the classroom, the staffroom, the school offices, the playing pitches/courts, school tours and of every location or occasion where both students and teachers undertake school business.
- All subjects will be taught through the medium of the Irish Language.
- Within the Irish Language Policy, the needs of teachers and learners with regard to other languages taught in the school will be recognised, and every freedom and help made available to assist in the acquisition of these languages.
- Every support, resource and help will be made available to teachers to help them implement this Policy.
- Every visitor to the school will conduct his/her business through the medium of Irish (e.g. State bodies, Businesses, Universities). In exceptional circumstances, the Board of Management may grant an exemption.
- A very high standard of Irish will be a condition of any recruitment of school personnel.
- There will be a special emphasis on the culture of the Irish Language and of the local *Gaeltacht* of *Corca Dhuibhne* within the school curriculum. Students of all abilities in the Irish Language will be catered for (e.g. the student whose home language is Irish to the fluent speaker).
- Co-operation with organisations in the local area will be encouraged in order to preserve and strengthen the Irish Language and to achieve some of the goals mentioned heretofore.

This Policy also recognises that there are registered students of *Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne* who may not have a sufficient level of Irish to enable them to participate fully in Irish Language activities.

To that end:

- Parents and teachers who cannot overcome those language challenges will be given every encouragement, support and help available.

- The conditions of the Agreed Settlement as signed in the High Court on the 9th July will be implemented as resources for same are made available.

Implementing the Language Policy

Rules regarding language behaviour in *Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne*

Irish is the sole language of instruction in the All-Irish Provision section of the school. The teacher teaches and communicates with the students in Irish only. Students communicate with one another in Irish only.

All class work and homework of the students in the All-Irish Provision section of the school will be done in Irish only. Work produced in any other language by the student will not be accepted by the teacher. (An exception is made in the case of English and other foreign languages being studied by the student).

The discipline procedure as outlined in the Code of Conduct will be followed in the case of any policy of *Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne* not being observed.

The Board of Management with the staff is responsible for the implementation of the policies of *Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne*.

The *Droichead* Programme will be implemented for the junior classes as outlined in Sections 5.3 and 5.4 of the Agreed Court Settlement.

Objectives 1

Current Status	Objective for All-Irish Provision section	Commencing
A mixture of languages in use in the school environment	1.1 Irish will be the language of communication of students, with each other at activities and in the environs of the school Years 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.	September 2012
A mixture of languages in use presently, in communication, in class work and in homework.	1.2 Irish will be the language of communication between teachers and students. 1.3 Irish will be the language of communication between students in the classroom. 1.4 Student class work and homework will be done entirely through Irish. Years 1, 2, 3 and 4. Years 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. Years 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.	Jan. 2011 Sept. 2011 Sept. 2012

Language Supports for Students

Language Supports currently available to *Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne* students.

Special Irish Language Course for Primary School entrants to *Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne*: The *Pobalscoil* organises a special Irish Language course for 6th Class

Primary School students who have already registered with *Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne*. The course takes place one evening per week, over 12 weeks in the school year. The course is aimed at those who are not yet fluent in Irish. The course includes language activities as well as interactive games supervised by specially trained leaders from Transition Year within the school.

Irish Language Scholarship Scheme: Subsidised scholarships to Irish Language courses in the *Corca Dhuibhne Gaeltacht* are made available to students of *Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne*.

The Droichead Programme: The *Droichead* Programme is a support programme for Junior Cycle students who are not yet fluent in Irish. After having spent some time in the *Droichead* Programme students will transfer to the All-Irish Provision section. The time spent in the *Droichead* Programme will depend on the individual student. The Programme is particularly aimed at students whose language skills are such that they prevent the student from communicating with the teacher and with other students in the class in Irish. Teaching in the *Droichead* Programme is aimed at and adapted to the particular language needs of the students. The focus is on (i) teaching the curriculum and, at the same time (ii) imparting the language skills necessary for the students to progress to the All-Irish Provision section of the school as early as possible. Every student will have progressed to the all-Irish Provision section by the end of his/her Third Year in the school.

School Language Assistants: Language Assistants are available to students who have little Irish or to students in the All-Irish Provision section who wish to enhance their Irish Language skills. The service is available in or outside of school hours.

Homework Club: The Club is open to students in Years 1 & 2 who have little Irish or have difficulty understanding the language. The Club Supervisor is available to help students with homework in Irish. It runs from 4 p.m. – 6 p.m. Monday to Friday.

Language Supports for Teachers

Language Supports for Teachers in *Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne*

Objectives 2

Current Status	Objective for the All-Irish Provision section	Commencing
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Infrequent discussion of Language Policy and of support for teachers.	2.1 Annual Monitoring Session and Review of progress of the Language Plan by the staff	September 2011
	2.2 Induction, as appropriate for new school staff.	January 2011
	2.3 Language profile of First year students to be provided to teachers	January 2011
	2.4 Regular occasions to be organised at which the School's Language Co-ordinator and teachers in the <i>Droichead</i> Programme meet to discuss resources, methodology and language matters.	January 2011
	2.5 Learning portfolio to be used and produced by each student in the <i>Droichead</i> Programme.	February 2011

Language Status of *Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne* For the school year 2009/2010

An analysis of language use in the class room in *Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne* for the school year 2009-2010 was done as part of the preparation for a Language Plan and in order to compare current language use with the school's Language Policy.

Questionnaires were distributed among (i) students and (ii) teachers and the results are outlined below.

The result of an evaluation carried out by the Department of Education and Skills among Parents, Students and Teachers in the *Pobalscoil* is outlined in Section (iii).

- (i) Language behaviour in the classroom – students
- (ii) Language behaviour in the classroom – teachers
- (iii) Evaluation by the Department of Education and Skills

(i) Iompar Teanga – students

‘Irish is the language of communication of the school and that is the language spoken by teachers and students’

(Language Policy Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne)

The following figures outline language behaviour between students and teachers, according to the students themselves. These are the replies given by students to an end of year questionnaire regarding the Irish Language Scheme (May 2010):

Students’ Questionnaire: ‘I always speak Irish to the teacher in the classroom’

First Year:

Agreed:	80%
Disagreed:	17%
No reply:	3%

Second Year:

Agreed:	64%
Disagreed:	33%
No reply:	1%

Third Year:

Agreed:	70%
Disagreed:	30%
No reply:	

(ii) Language Behaviour – Teachers

There was a variety of answers given by teachers in the All-Irish Provision section to the question ‘Which language do the students speak in the classroom?’ (December 2009)

Sixteen questionnaires were returned and here is a sample of some of the replies:

- ‘A mixture’
- ‘Both languages’
- ‘Irish all the time. Sometimes they may need to be given a word’
- ‘English among themselves. Irish when they speak to me’
- ‘English, even as I tell them to speak Irish’
- ‘Irish 90% of the time’.

Other teachers replied to the question by referring to different groups of learners. They referred to Year 1 / Year 2 / Year 3 as being very good with regard to using Irish. The teachers were also asked if they had to speak English while teaching in the All-Irish Provision section, and if that were the case, why and how often did they have to speak English. According to the questionnaires teachers have to speak English from time to time in order to explain words/terms and they must use teaching material in English from time to time. Apart from that, teachers feel that it is easier for them to teach through the medium of Irish since the *Droichead* Programme was introduced.

Teachers’ Questionnaire: Do teachers have to speak English in the class room?

- ‘Much much better. Am able to cover much more material.’
- ‘Really, I do not have to speak much English this year since those whose main language is English are now in Year 2 in the *Droichead* Programme (I do not teach Year 3)’

(iii) Evaluation by the Department of Education & Skills

Here are excerpts from the document ‘The Implementation of the Agreed Settlement of the High Court July 2009 Report on the Evaluation of the Inspectorate’ issued on 20th October 2010.

The school is functioning effectively as an All-Irish school. Inspectors were assured that the school community accepts that *Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne* is an All-Irish school and that the All-Irish Provision is available from First Year to Sixth Year. Teachers reported that there is an improvement in all the junior classes as a result of the introduction of the *Droichead* Programme and in some groups in the Senior Cycle.

As outlined to the inspectors, even though students usually speak Irish among themselves in practical or informal classroom situations, their teachers encourage them to speak Irish. Teachers say that this encouragement is working. Students usually reply in Irish only, very naturally and without any great difficulty, to teachers' questions. It is best practice to have a positive attitude and an encouraging approach to the use of Irish by students in the classroom.

In the dialogue with inspectors, the management agreed that the use of Irish as the first language of communication among the students is one of the most urgent challenges in the school (2010, 3-4).

Result of Analysis

The analysis of the current status of *Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne* indicates that we are going in the right direction with regard to '**The provision of an All-Irish language post primary education for the community of Corca Dhuibhne**' but that there are still some steps to be taken in order to fully realise this objective. We believe that it is better to achieve this objective by clarifying what is involved in using Irish, in the classroom, in the environs of the school, in particular sectors of the school community, including students.

To that end, this Three Year Plan for the Irish Language has been formulated by the Committee for the All-Irish Provision, it has been put before the teachers, the Parents' Committee, the Board of Management and the Student Council so that all of the school community can together and in a positive way create an Irish language environment for the students of *Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne*, in the classroom, in the school and in all school activities.

Action Plan 2011 – 2013

In order to achieve Objective 1.3, i.e. '**that Irish be the language of communication of students among themselves, at school activities and in the environs of the school**', a

series of actions, to develop Irish as the language of communication of teachers, students staff, parents and visitors in the *Pobalscoil*, will be implemented over the next three years.

The plan will come into effect on 1st January 2011 and will last for a period of three years. There are two main parts in the Plan of Action:

- To encourage the use of Irish among the students and
- To further enhance the competency/fluency of those whose home language is Irish

Current Status

Activities / Competitions

The students are involved in many Irish Language activities and competitions such as ‘*Scléip*’, debating competitions, *Raidió Ghael-Linn*, *An tOireachtas* and others, and so have an opportunity to meet other students in an Irish language environment.

They will take part in other activities such as Young Entrepreneur of the Year where Irish will be the language of communication of the students. These activities give the students an opportunity to celebrate their Irish language heritage before the rest of the world.

Sport

Sporting competitions including football, basketball and rugby will all be conducted in Irish as they give the students an opportunity to celebrate their Irish language heritage before the rest of the world.

School Magazine

The Pobalscoil school magazine is produced annually by the students and under the direction of a teacher, to celebrate the year’s activities.

Drama / Transition Year Musical

A school play in Irish is staged annually by the Transition Year students under the direction of a teacher.

Student Council

The Council was founded to give a voice to students with regard to current school and student affairs. The Council’s work will be through Irish and if/when they take part in *Dáil na nÓg*, participants will speak in Irish..

Language Usage

Objectives 3

Current Status	Objective for the All-Irish Provision section	Commencing
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<p>A pilot Leadership Course in 2009/2010 was successful.</p>	<p>3.1 To provide a Leadership course in Irish for Transition Year students which will help develop both leadership and interpersonal skills. This will support the Irish Language Club and new students entering the school. The trained Leaders will also act as Language Mentors in the school.</p>	<p>September 2011</p>
<p>There is no structure of this kind in place presently.</p>	<p>3.2 To establish an Irish Language Club, which the students have ownership of and input into, and which will encourage the use of Irish in the <i>Pobalscoil</i> e.g. in the use of the school intercom system.</p>	<p>October 2011</p>
<p>Language Awareness delivered infrequently at the moment.</p>	<p>3.3 A Language Awareness course as a starting point for the Irish Language Club.</p>	<p>October 2011</p>
<p>Opportunities for socialisation not organised regularly at the moment.</p>	<p>3.4 To give an opportunity to the Irish Language Club to take part in social activities. This will be done with the assistance of the Language Assistant and Irish Language youth groups.</p>	<p>November 2011</p>
<p>A Walking Club as recreation for students and teachers where the language of communication is Irish.</p>	<p>3.5 To form a walking group and link it with the Irish Language Club.</p>	<p>March 2011</p>
<p>There are no opportunities of this kind available presently.</p>	<p>3.6 Broadcast time on <i>Raidió na Gaeltachta</i> for students who have prepared excerpts for radio.</p>	<p>March 2011</p>
<p>There is no structure of this kind in place presently.</p>	<p>3.7 Activities or competitions to be organised as part of Seachtain na Gaeilge by the Irish Language Club.</p>	<p>March 2011</p>

Objectives 3

Current Status	Objective for the All-Irish Provision section	Commencing
<p>This competition was successful in 2009.</p>	<p>3.8 To organise Cool-Chaint, an inspiring competition for the</p>	<p>March 2012</p>

<p>There is no special Irish Language module of this kind presently available.</p> <p>Only available on an infrequent basis presently.</p>	<p>junior cycle classes as it encourages them to speak Irish. Prizes will be awarded to the best class.</p> <p>3.9 A special Irish Language module to be available to the Transition Year students to enable them to better prepare for the Senior Cycle. This module will be as a regular Irish Language class – 4 classes of 40 mins. a week.</p> <p>3.10 To invite guest speakers to the school to speak about language matters in general and their positive influences on life and work.</p>	<p>January 2011</p> <p>March 2011</p>
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Enhancing Language Skills – Strategies

Objectives 4

Current Status	Objective for All-Irish Provision section	Commencing
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Intermittent encouragement only available presently	4.1	Local native speakers to be invited to speak to students from time to time on local issues in order to give students a practical opportunity to enhance their language skills.	February 2011
	4.2	To take on commonly made mistakes by making a note of same weekly, by distributing them among teachers and by showing corrected examples on the school television screen.	March 2011
	4.3	To tackle phonetics/vocabulary by organising a workshop for students who take part in drama, in debates or in public speaking.	March 2011
	4.4	To give students opportunities to read relevant texts/literature in Irish and to listen to same where possible.	March 2011
	4.5	To encourage good writing habits in Irish, to encourage the use of phrases/proverbs in schoolwork, in the annual magazine and in competitions run by <i>Údarás na Gaeltachta</i> or <i>An tOireachtas</i>.	September 2011
	4.6	To organise a course for native speakers or fluent speakers of Irish, which enhances their vocabulary, accent etc. This may be part of the school curriculum, depending on funding or support for such an initiative.	October 2011
	4.7	To gather information from/interview people in Irish as part of a class project e.g. S.P.H.E/Irish (on local history or folklore for example)	September 2012

Monitoring & Reviewing

It is the Board of Management of *Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne* with senior management of the school who will be responsible for the effective functioning and the review of this Plan.

It is the teachers and the staff who will be responsible for the implementation of the Plan in their classes or in their area of work, with the support of the Language Co-Ordinator.

The committee for the All-Irish Provision will advise the Board of Management with regard to the monitoring and functioning of the Plan.

An annual report will be made to the Board of Management on the functioning of the Plan. This will be based on a annual monitoring and review for the school staff (2.1). There will be an opportunity for the Parents' Council, the Students' Council and the sub-committee for All-Irish Provision to have an input into this process.

Non-observance of the Language Policy of *Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne* will be dealt with according to the discipline procedure of the school as outlined to the staff and students.

Appendix

The following is a list of guidelines, policies, and written material considered as the Language Plan for *Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne* was prepared:

- Guidelines for the *Droichead* Programme
- Questionnaires 2009/2010
- Code of Behaviour for *Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne* 2010
- Language Policy of *Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne* September 2010 (pg.3)
- Agreed High Court Settlement
- Report on Assessment by Inspectors of the Department of Education and Skills.