



# Ó DHÍOLÚINE GO HIONCHUIMSIÚ: TUARASCÁIL TAIGHDE AR DHÍOLÚINTÍ Ó STAIDÉAR NA GAEILGE

## FROM EXEMPTION TO INCLUSION: RESEARCH REPORT ON EXEMPTIONS FROM THE STUDY OF IRISH

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**Meitheamh 2026** – June 2026



**Ó Dhíolúine go hIonchuimsiú:  
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# Achoimre Fheidhmeach

Deonaítear díolúintí ar dhá phríomhchúis: (i) daltaí a bhfuil míchumas foghlama orthu, nó (ii) daltaí a fuair a gcuid oideachais bunscoile thar lear suas go dtí aois áirithe. Léiríonn na staitisticí is déanaí go raibh breis is 73,000 dalta díolmhaithe ó staidéar na Gaeilge in 2024-2025. Tá na figiúirí réasúnta seasmhach ag leibhéal na bunscoile, mar a bhfuil 12,131 nó 2.2% de dhaltáí bunscoile díolmhaithe san iomlán. Bhí fás as cuimse, áfach, ag leibhéal na hiar-bhunscoile. Tháinig fás 109% ar líon na ndaltaí a ndeonaíodh díolúine dóibh de bharr deacrachtaí foghlama ag leibhéal na hiar-bhunscoile ó 2017 i leith. Fágann sé sin go bhfuil 60,946 (14.3%) de dhaltáí iar-bhunscoile díolmhaithe ón nGaeilge. As an 37,974 dalta iar-bhunscoile a raibh díolúine acu in 2024 de bharr míchumas foghlama, rinne 19,404 (51%) acu staidéar ar theanga iasachta.

Cé go bhfógraíonn an Roinn Oideachais agus Óige ina gcuid polasaithe go bhfuil cur chuige ionchuimsitheach oideachais i bhfeidhm acu, ní thagann díolúine leis an bhfealsúnacht sin. Faoi chur chuige Universal Design for Learning a bheadh ag teacht le polasaí ionchuimsitheach, bheifí ag súil go gcuirfí an curaclam agus an cur chuige teagaisc in oiriúint do riachtanais an dalta seachas an dualgas a bheith ar an dalta iad féin a chur in oiriúint don chóras agus glacadh le curaclam laghdaithe. Tagann córas na ndíolúintí salach ar an bhfianaise ón taighde reatha a léiríonn go bhfuil ag éirí le daltaí a bhfuil riachtanais bhreise oideachais acu dul i ngleic le teangacha breise agus go bhfuil torthaí chomh maith nó níos fearr acu sa chéad teanga (T1) is atá ag a bpiaraí nach ndéanann staidéar ach ar theanga amháin. Léiríonn an taighde go mbíonn dea-thionchar ag foghlaim scileanna litearthachta an dara teanga (T2) ar scileanna litearthachta T1. Meastar go dtarlaíonn sé seo de bharr na ngníomhaíochtaí litearthachta a bheith méadaithe seachas laghdaithe. Éiríonn go han-mhaith le daltaí i scoileanna lan-Ghaeilge agus gaelcholáistí an Ghaeilge a shealbhú ach an tacaíocht chuí a bheith ar fáil.

**Ní hamháin go bhfuil an cleachtas in Éirinn maidir le díolúintí as riocht leis an taighde, tá sé as riocht leis an gcleachtas i dtíortha eile. In Éirinn deonaítear díolúine bhuan ar dhaltáí ar bhonn forleathan ach ar fud na hEorpa is i gcásanna fioreisceachtúla amháin agus ar bhonn sealadach a deonaítear í.** Baineann sé seo le daltaí a bhfuil riachtanais bhreise oideachais acu agus daltaí a thagann déanach chun na tíre araon. Sna cásanna fioreisceachtúla ina ndeonaítear díolúine, teastaíonn an-chuid fianaise faoi mhúnla cliniciúil faoi mar a mhol *Comhchoiste na Gaeilge, na Gaeltachta agus Phobal Labhartha na Gaeilge* in 2024.

# Executive Summary

Exemptions from the study of Irish are granted for two main reasons: (i) pupils with a learning disability, or (ii) pupils who have received their primary education abroad up to a certain age. The latest statistics show that over 73,000 students were exempt from the study of Irish in 2024–2025. The figures are relatively stable at primary level with 12,131 pupils exempted or 2.2% of primary pupils in total. However, there has been considerable growth at post-primary level. The number of students granted an exemption due to learning difficulties has grown by 109% at post-primary level since 2017. The result is that 60,946 (14.3%) of post-primary pupils are exempt from Irish. Of the 37,974 post-primary pupils exempted in 2024 due to a learning disability, 19,404 (51%) studied a foreign language.

**While the Department of Education and Youth proclaims in their policies that they have an inclusive education approach in place, exemptions from Irish don't align with this philosophy.** Under a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach consistent with an inclusive policy, the curriculum and teaching approach should be adapted to the needs of the student rather than requiring the student to adapt to the system and to accept a reduced curriculum. The system of exemptions contradicts the evidence from current research which shows that students with additional educational needs are successful in learning additional languages and their grades in their first language (L1) are as good or better than their peers who study only one language. Research shows that learning second language (L2) literacy skills has a positive impact on L1 literacy skills. This is thought to occur due to increased rather than reduced literacy activities. Pupils in Irish-medium schools and gaelcholáistí are very successful in acquiring Irish provided the appropriate support is available which further bolsters the research results.

Not only does the practice in Ireland in relation to exemptions not align with current research, it is also out of line with practice in other countries. In Ireland, permanent exemption is widely granted to pupils but across Europe an exemption is only granted in very exceptional cases and on a temporary basis. This applies to both students with additional educational needs and students coming late to the country. In the very exceptional cases where an exemption is granted, a large body of evidence is required within a clinical model as recommended by the *Comhchoiste na Gaeilge, na Gaeltachta agus Phobal Labhartha na Gaeilge* in 2024.

Séantar buntáistí an dátheangachais ar dhaltáí a bhfuil riachtanais bhreise oideachais acu agus is náireach an staid é sin i bhfianaise an taighde reatha. Séantar an deis imeasctha ar dhaltáí a thagann déanach chun na tíre a bhronnadh bunchumas sa Ghaeilge orthu. Tugtar an teachtaireacht dóibh nach bhfuil an Ghaeilge tábhachtach agus nach gcuireann muintir na hÉireann luach uirthi faoi mar a dhéantar ar mhionteangacha i dtíortha eile. De réir na hanailíse thíos, má leanann an ráta fáis ar dhíolúintí mar a bhí le cúig bliana anuas, beidh díolúine ag 22.5% de dhaltáí iar-bhunscoile faoi 2030. Is féidir an staid thubaisteach sin a sheachaint ach na moltaí thíos a chur i bhfeidhm.

## MOLTAÍ

- **Deireadh a chur le díolúintí ag leibhéal na bunscoile**

Is féidir curaclam na Gaeilge sa bhunscoil a chur in oiriúint do dhaltáí a bhfuil riachtanais bhreise acu agus an tacaíocht foghlama chuí a chur ar fáil dóibh.

- **Díolúintí sealadacha, páirtdhíolúine, socruithe réasúnta, agus rogha sonraíochta ag leibhéal na hiar-bhunscoile**

Ag leibhéal na hiar-bhunscoile d'fhéadfaí socruithe réasúnta a chur i bhfeidhm bunaithe ar riachtanais na ndaltáí chomh maith leis an gcur chuige teagaisc a leasú. Ba ghá, mar a dhéantar ar fud na hEorpa, breathnú ar chúrsaí measúnaithe agus deimhin a dhéanamh de go mbeadh rogha sonraíochta ann a d'fheilfeadh do réimse leathan cumais ar bhealach a thagann leis an bhFráma Tagartha Comónta Eorpach. Chuideodh díolúine shealadach agus páirtdhíolúine le daltaí a thagann go déanach go dtí an córas, teacht isteach ar an nGaeilge ag leibhéal níos bunúsaí. Ní mór tacaíocht foghlama san iar-bhunscoil a chomhtháthú leis na hábhair eile, faoi mar a dhéantar sa bhunscoil.

- **I gcásanna fioreisceachtúla, ba iad síceolaithe oideachais na Roinne Oideachais agus Óige (NEPS) a chinneadh go mbronnfaí díolúine ó staidéar na Gaeilge faoi mhúnla cliniciúil**

Sa chás nach mbeadh na socruithe réasúnta agus an rogha sonraíochta oiriúnach, d'fhéadfaí moladh Chomhchoiste na Gaeilge, na Gaeltachta agus Phobal Labhartha na Gaeilge in 2024 a leanúint agus dul i muinín saineolas síceolaithe oideachais na Roinne Oideachais agus Óige (NEPS). Bheadh an cur chuige seo ag teacht leis an gcleachtas a leantar i dtíortha na hEorpa a cheadaíonn díolúintí fioreisceachtúla ó fhoghlaim teangacha.

**Students with additional educational needs are denied the benefits of bilingualism and this is a disgraceful situation in the light of current research. Pupils who arrive late to the country are denied the opportunity of integration into Irish society which a basic competence in Irish would confer. The message they are given is that the Irish language is not important nor is it valued by the Irish people unlike minority languages in other countries.** According to the analysis below, if the rate of growth of exemptions in the last five years continues, 22.5% of post-primary pupils will be exempt by 2030. This disastrous situation can be avoided by applying the recommendations below.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Cease exemptions at primary level**

The Irish language curriculum in primary school can be adapted to pupils with additional needs, and they should be provided with appropriate learning support.

- **Temporary exemptions, partial exemption, reasonable arrangements, and choice of specification at post-primary level**

At post-primary level reasonable accommodations could be put in place based on students' needs as well as adapting the teaching approach. It would be necessary, as happens across Europe, to look at student assessment to ensure that there is a choice of specification suitable for a wide range of abilities aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference. A temporary and partial exemption would help students coming late to the system to access Irish at a more basic level. Learning support in post-primary school must be integrated with the other subjects, as is the case in primary school.

- **In very exceptional cases, the Department of Education and Youth educational psychologists (NEPS) would decide if an exemption should be granted using a clinical model**

In the event that the reasonable accommodations and greater specification options were not sufficient, the recommendation of the Comhchoiste na Gaeilge, na Gaeltachta agus Phobal Labhartha na Gaeilge in 2024 could be implemented whereby the expertise of the educational psychologists of the Department of Education and Youth (NEPS) would be drawn upon to determine if a permanent exemption was required. This approach would be in line with the practice followed in European countries that allows for very exceptional exemptions from language learning.

# RÉAMHRÁ AGUS CÚLRA

Ba de réir a chéile a tháinig díolúintí ó staidéar na Gaeilge isteach mar chuid de chreat an tsoláthair curaclaim sa chóras oideachais in Éirinn. Bronntar díolúintí ar chúiseanna éagsúla ach is dháchatagóir go príomha a bhíonn i gceist:

- (i) **daltaí a bhfuil míchumas foghlama acu, nó**
- (ii) **daltaí a fuair a gcuid oideachais bunscoile thar lear suas to dtí aois áirithe.**

Ba i 1979 a eisíodh an chéad ciorclán chuig bunscoileanna ag tabhairt díolúine ó staidéar na Gaeilge “do scoláirí a raibh a gcuid oideachais faighte acu lasmuigh d’Éirinn suas go haois 11 bhliain agus do leanaí taidhleoirí agus ionadaithe consalacha” (An Chigireacht, 2018, p. 9). I lár na 1990aidí leathnaíodh na critéir chuig daltaí i scoileanna speisialta a raibh míchumais foghlama éagsúla acu le an bpróiseas imeasctha chuig scoileanna príomhshrutha a éascú dóibh.

Sa tuarascáil seo, cuirtear anailís i láthair ar fhás na ndíolúintí ó 1999 i leith. Déantar measúnú ar thionchar na gcioclán a eisíodhin 2019 a bhí mar thoradh ar athbhreithniú agus ar chomhairliúchán poiblí. Pléitear impleachtaí na ndíolúintí don chóras oideachais trí chéile agus do na daltaí a ndéanfaidís díolúine orthu. Pléitear cur chuige ionchuimsitheach oideachais a fhógraíonn an Roinn Oideachais agus Óige ach a chuirtear i leataobh maidir le deiseanna foghlama Gaeilge de. Cuirtear iniúchadh i láthair ar an gcleachtas i dtíortha eile maidir le foghlaim mionteangacha agus teangacha breise, agus daltaí a bhfuil deacrachtaí foghlama acu nó a thagann déanach chun na tíortha sin. Ar deireadh, déantar tuar ar na treochtaí don todhchaí má leanann an ráta fais ar líon na ndíolúintí mar tá le cúig bliana anuas. Ar deireadh, cuirtear conclúid agus moltaí i láthair.

# INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Exemptions from the study of Irish gradually became part of the framework of curriculum provision in the Irish education system. Exemptions are granted for a variety of reasons but mainly consist of two categories:

- (i) **pupils with a learning disability, or**
- (ii) **pupils who have received their primary education abroad up to a certain age.**

In 1979 the first circular was issued to primary schools exempting students from the study of Irish who had received their education outside Ireland up to the age of 11 and the children of diplomats and consular representatives (The Inspectorate, 2018, p. 9). In the mid-1990s the criteria were extended to pupils in special schools with various learning disabilities to facilitate their integration into mainstream schools.

This report presents an analysis of the growth of exemptions since 1999. It assesses the impact of the circulars issued in 2019 and 2022 that resulted from a review and public consultation. The implications of the exemptions are discussed for the education system as a whole and for the students who are granted an exemption. The inclusive educational approach which the Department of Education and Youth proclaims in policy documents but sets aside in relation to opportunities to learn Irish is discussed. An audit of the practice in other countries regarding the learning of minority and additional languages is presented as it applies to students who have learning difficulties or come late to the education system in those countries. The implications of the exemption from the study of Irish on the pupils and their life choices are discussed. After that, the trends for the future growth in the number of exemptions are estimated based on the rate of growth over past five years. Finally, a conclusion and recommendations are presented.

# AN STAID REATHA

Sa rannóg seo tugtar cur síos ar na critéir faoina ndeonaítear díolúintí ó staidéar na Gaeilge agus ansin déantar anailís ar líon na ndaltaí ar bronnadh díolúine orthu ó 2017 i leith. Roghnaíodh 2017 le go mbeadh comparáid ar fáil ar an tréimhse sular leasaíodh córas na ndíolúintí in 2019 agus arís in 2022. Mar a luadh thuas, ceann de na cúiseanna go ndeonaítear díolúine ó staidéar na Gaeilge ná “deacrachtaí suntasacha agus marthanacha foghlama” (An Roinn Oideachais, 2019, p. 3) a bheith ag dalta. Roimh 2019, ba ghá do thuismitheoirí measúnú a fháil ó síceolaí sula bhféadfaidís iarratas a dhéanamh ar dhíolúine da bpáiste.

Baineadh an riachtanas sin in 2019 agus “níl ach aon scór gnóthachtála litearthachta amháin ag/faoi bhun an 10ú peircintíl in aon cheann de Léitheoireacht Focal, Léamhthuiscint nó Litriú i gceist sna critéir le haghaidh díolúine” (An Roinn Oideachais, 2019, p. 3) (cló trom sa bhunleagan). Leasú eile a rinneadh ná an aois a d’fhéadfadh daltaí a fuair a gcuid oideachais bunscoile lasmuigh den stát nó a bhí ag athrollú tar éis tréimhse a chaitheamh thar lear a ardú ó 11 bhliain go “12 bhliain nó an bhliain dheireanach sa bhunoideachas” (An Roinn Oideachais, 2019, p. 3).

# THE CURRENT SITUATION

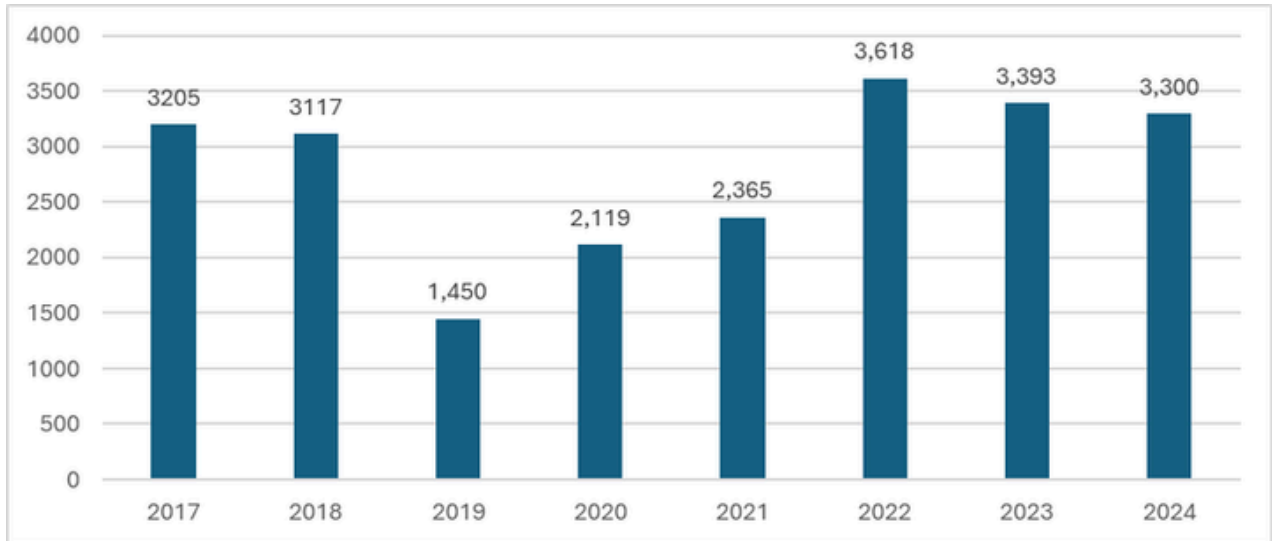
This section describes the criteria under which exemptions from the study of Irish are granted and then the number of students who have been granted an exemption since 2017 is analysed. The year 2017 was chosen to provide a comparison with the period before the exemption system was amended in 2019 and again in 2022. As mentioned above, one of the reasons why an exemption from the study of Irish is granted is that a student has "significant learning difficulties that are persistent" (Department of Education, 2019, p. 4). Prior to 2019, parents had to get an assessment from a psychologist before they could apply for an exemption for their child.

This requirement was removed in 2019 and the criterion for exemption requires "a Standardised Score on a discrete test in either Word Reading, Reading Comprehension or Spelling at/below the 10th percentile" (Department of Education, 2019, p. 4). Another amendment made is the age that pupils who received their primary education outside the state or who were re-enrolling after a period spent abroad was raised from 11 years to "students whose education up to 12 years of age (or up to and including the final year of their primary education)" (Department of Education, 2019, p. 3).

# AN BHUNSCOIL

Feictear i **bhFíor 1** go bhfuil líon na ndaltaí díolmhaithe réasúnta seasmhach ag leibhéal na bunscoile le trí bliana anuas. Bhí titim suntasach sna trí bliana 2019–2021 agus b'fhéidir gur bhain sé sin le cur i bhfeidhm na gcritéar nua.

**Fíor 1.** Líon na ndaltaí dar deonáíodh díolúine ó staidéar na Gaeilge den chéad uair de bharr míchumas foghlama 2017–2024



Feictear i dTábla 1 an seasmhacht chéanna nuair a scrúdaítear líon agus céatadán iomlán na ndaltaí bunscoile dar deonáíodh díolúine orthu le trí bliana anuas ach gur laghdú atá ann ón tréimhse sular tháinig an córas nua i bhfeidhm in 2019.

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<b>Líon na ndaltaí bunscoile a bhfuil díolúine acu</b>	18,301	16,535	14,033	11,672	10,321	13,060	12,190	12,131
<b>% na ndaltaí bunscoile a bhfuil díolúine acu</b>	3.30%	2.90%	2.50%	2.10%	1.90%	2.30%	2.20%	2.20%

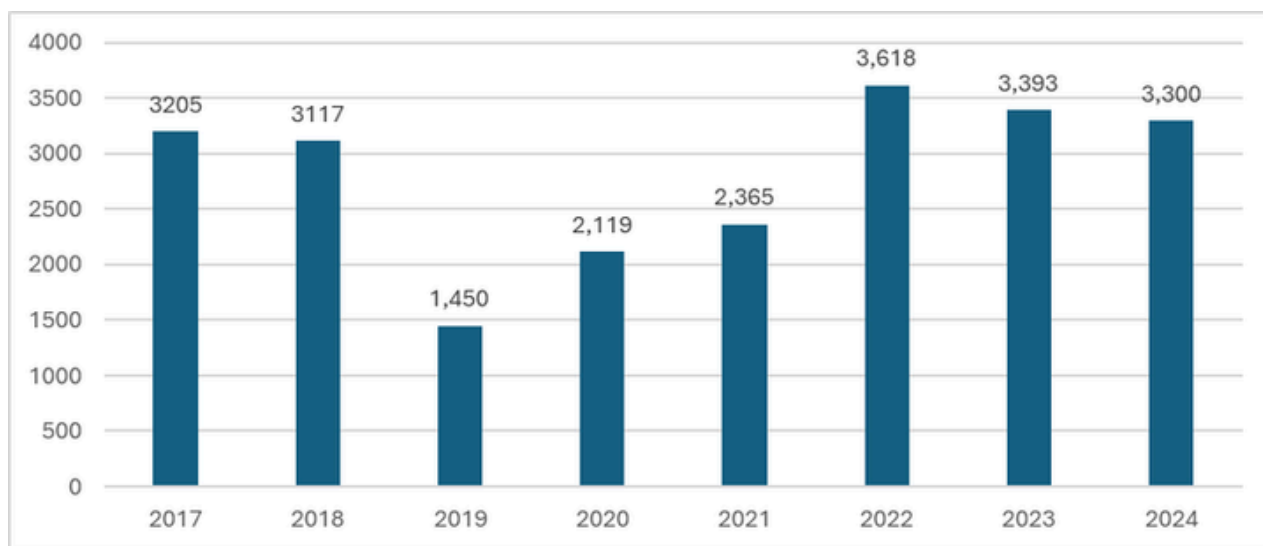
**Tábla 1.** Líon agus céatadán iomlán na ndaltaí bunscoile dar deonáíodh díolúine ó staidéar na Gaeilge dóibh

Foinse: <https://education-statistics-doeirl.hub.arcgis.com/search?collection=Dataset&q=exemptions>

# PRIMARY

**Figure 1** shows that the number of pupils exempted from the study of Irish has remained relatively stable at primary level over the last three years. There was a significant drop in the three years 2019-2021 and this may have been related to the application of the new criteria.

**Figure 1.** Number of students who were granted an exemption from the study of Irish for the first time due to a learning disability 2017-2024



**Table 1** shows the same stability when examining the total number and percentage of primary pupils who have been granted an exemption in the last three years and this is a decrease from the period before the new system came into operation in 2019.

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<b>Number of primary school pupils with an exemption</b>	18,301	16,535	14,033	11,672	10,321	13,060	12,190	12,131
<b>% of primary school pupils with an exemption</b>	3.30%	2.90%	2.50%	2.10%	1.90%	2.30%	2.20%	2.20%

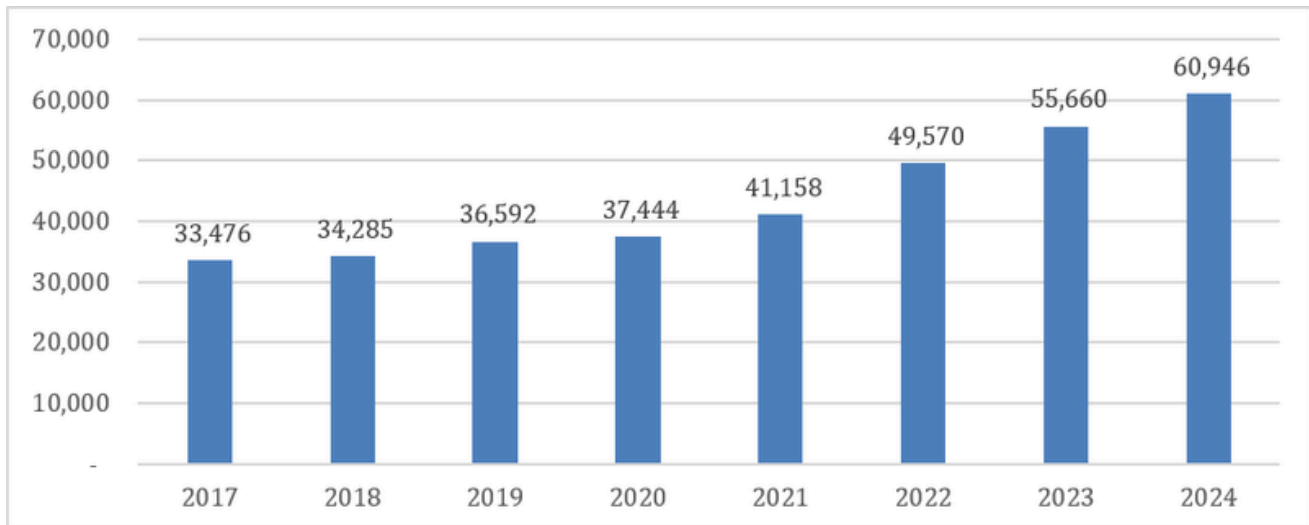
**Table 1.** Total number and percentage of primary school pupils granted an exemption from the study of Irish

Source: <https://education-statistics-doeirl.hub.arcgis.com/search?collection=Dataset&q=exemptions>

# AN IAR-BHUNSCOIL

Scéal eile ar fad atá ann ag leibhéal na hiar-bhunscoile. Feictear i **bhFíor 2** go bhfuil fás suntasach tar éis teacht ar líon iomlán na ndaltaí a bhí díolmhaithe gach bliain ó 2017 i leith.

**Fíor 2.** Líon iomlán na ndaltaí iar-bhunscoile a raibh díolúine acude réir bliana.



Feictear i **dTábla 2** go bhfuil céatadán na ndaltaí tar éis ardú ó 9.4% in 2017 go 14.3% in 2024 nó duine as gach seachtar. Is fiú a thabhairt chun cuimhne go riabh díolúine ó staidéar na Gaeilge ag 2.5% de dhaltaí iar-bhunscoile in 1999. As an 60,946 dalta a raibh díolúine acu in 2024, bhí díolúine ag 37,974 (62%) de bharr deacrachtaí suntasacha agus marthanacha foghlama agus ag 22,972 (38%) toisc go bhfuair siad a gcuid oideachais go dtí sin lasmuigh den stat. Is cinnte go bhfuil tionchar ar líon na ndaltaí ó thar lear ag imirt tionchair ar líon iomlán na ndíolúintí ach tá tionchar níos suntasaí ag na daltaí a ndeonaítear díolúine orthu de bharr deacrachtaí foghlama. Déantar anailís ar na figiúirí sin i **bhFíor 3**.

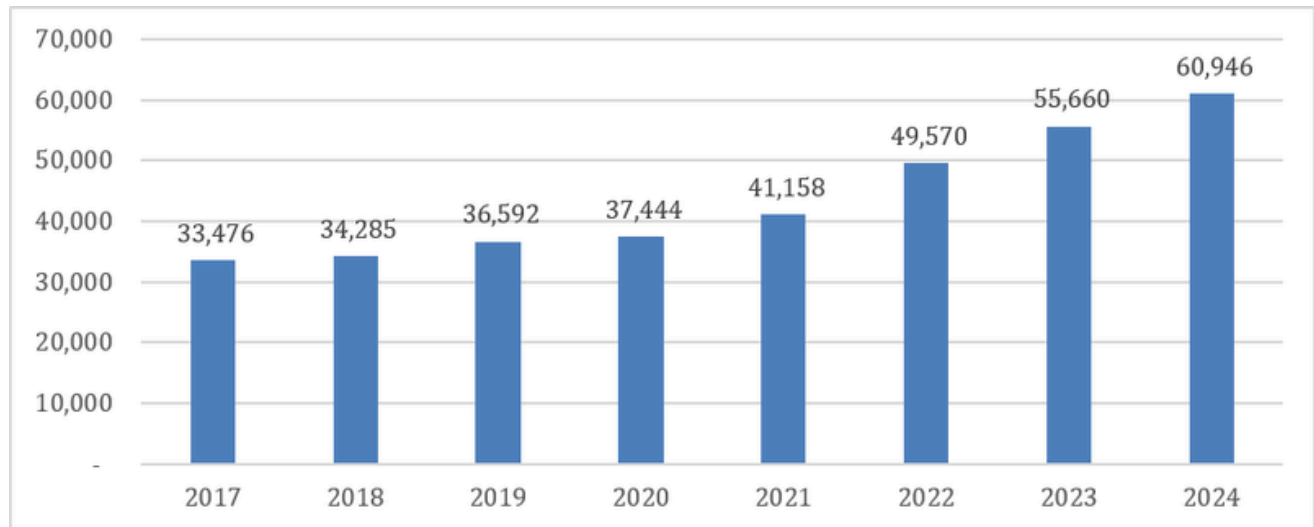
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Líon na ndaltaí iar-bhunscoile a bhfuil díolúine acu	33,476	34,285	36,592	37,444	41,158	49,570	55,660	60,946
Líon na ndaltaí iar-bhunscoile a bhfuil díolúine acu	9.4%	9.5%	9.9%	9.9%	10.5%	12.2%	13.4%	14.3%

**Tábla 2.** Líon agus céatadán iomlán na ndaltaí iar-bhunscoile a raibh díolúine acu faoi gach catagóir

# POST-PRIMARY

The situation is quite different at the post-primary level. **Figure 2** shows that the total number of exempted students has grown significantly each year since 2017.

**Figure 2.** Total number of post-primary students exempted by year.



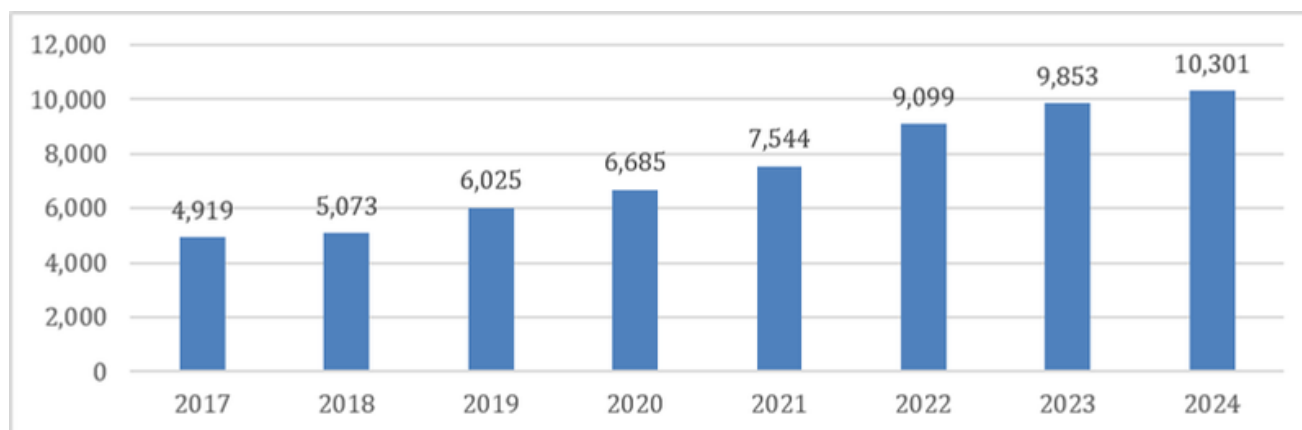
**Table 2** shows that the percentage of students has risen from 9.4% in 2017 to 14.3% in 2024 or one in seven students. It is worth recalling that only 2.5% of post-primary students were exempt from the study of Irish in 1999. Of the 60,946 pupils who had an exemption in 2024, 37,974 (62%) had an exemption due to significant and sustained learning difficulties and 22,972 (38%) had received their education so far outside the state. The number of students from abroad is certainly affecting the total number of exemptions but the students who are granted an exemption due to learning difficulties have a more significant impact. These figures are analysed further in **Figure 3**.

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<b>Number of post-primary students with an exemption</b>	33,476	34,285	36,592	37,444	41,158	49,570	55,660	60,946
<b>% of post-primary students with an exemption</b>	9.4%	9.5%	9.9%	9.9%	10.5%	12.2%	13.4%	14.3%

**Table 2.** Total number and percentage of post-primary students exempted under each category

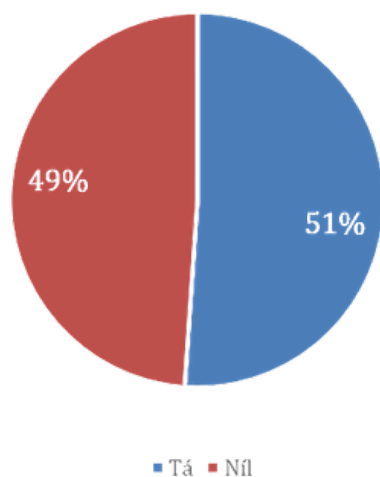
Léirítear i bhFíor 3 an fás leanúnach a tháinig ar líon na ndaltaí a deonaíodh díolúine dóibh de bharr deacrachtaí foghlama de réir bliana. Feictear gur deonaíodh níos lú ná 5,000 díolúine in 2017 ach go raibh dúbailt ar an líon sin go os cionn 10,000 faoi 2024.

**Fíor 3.** Líon na ndíolúintí a bronnadh de bharr deacrachtaí foghlama de réir bliana



Creidtear uaireanta má bhíonn deacrachtaí litearthachta ag dalta nach mbeidh siad in ann teanga bhreise a fhoghlaim. Tá sé tábhachtach a dhearbú nach bhfuil a leithéid de rud ann agus míchumas foghlama teanga (Sparks, 2016). Má bhíonn disléicse ar dhalta, mar shampla, beidh dúshláin sa bhreis ach leis an bhfocal clóite sa chéad agus sa dara teanga. Ní bhaineann an fhadhb leis an nGaeilge sa chás seo ach leis an deacracht litearthachta ar nós disléicse. Is fiú a rá chomh maith maidir leis na tástálacha faoinandeonaítear na díolúintí gur tástálacha ar chumas sa Bhéarla atá i gceist sna tástálacha Léitheoireacht Focal, Léamhthuiscint nó Litriú. Ní hamhlaidh go ndéantar tástáil ar chumas an dalta sa Ghaeilge sula ndéantar cinneadh nach ndéanfaidh sé/sí staidéar ar an nGaeilge.

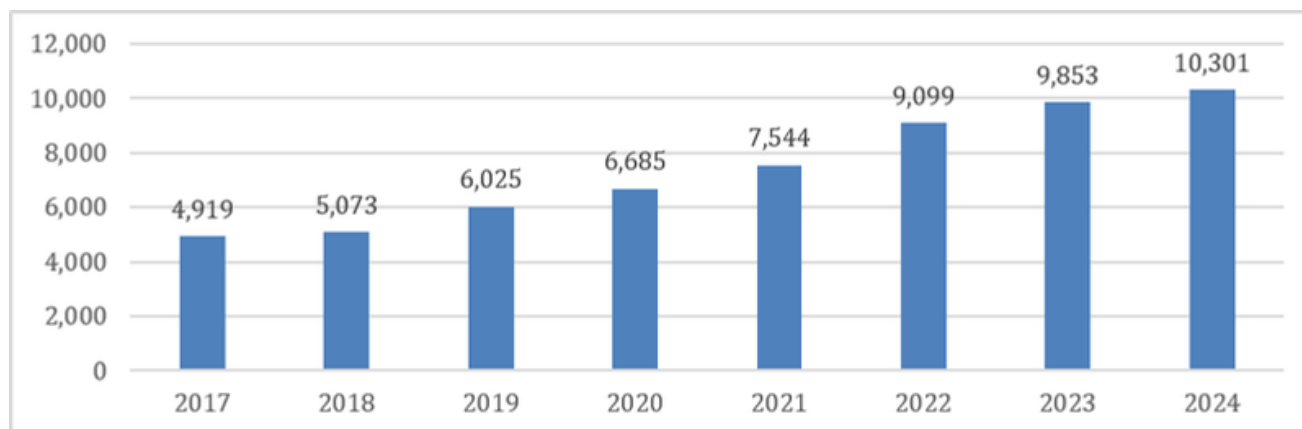
Leis an bpointe sin a threisiú, feictear i **bhFíor 4**, as an 37,974 dalta a raibh díolúine acu in 2024 de bharr deacrachtaí foghlama, rinne 19,404 (51%) acu staidéar ar theanga iasachta.



**Fíor 4.** Dalta a bhí díolmhaithe ó staidéar na Gaeilge in 2024 de bharr deacrachtaí foghlama agus a rinne staidéar ar theanga iasachta

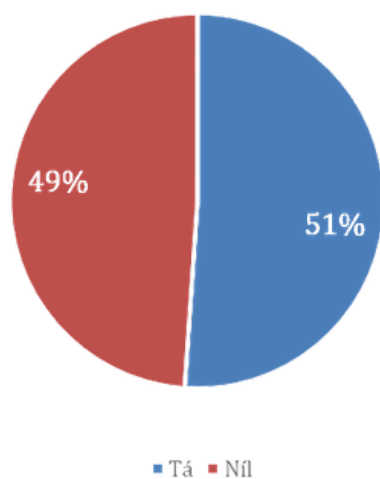
**Figure 3** shows the continuous growth in the number of students who were granted an exemption due to learning difficulties by year. It can be seen that less than 5,000 exemptions were granted in 2017, but that number had doubled to over 10,000 by 2024.

**Figure 3.** Number of exemptions granted due to learning difficulties by year.



It is sometimes believed that if a student has literacy difficulties, they will not be able to learn an additional language. It is important to confirm that there is no such thing as language learning disability (Sparks, 2016). If a student has dyslexia, for example, they will have additional challenges with written words in the first and additional languages. The challenge is not with the Irish language in this case but with the literacy difficulty such as dyslexia. It is also worth noting that the tests used to grant exemptions are tests of proficiency in English. It is not the case that the student's ability in Irish is tested before a decision is made that he/she will not study Irish.

To reinforce this point, **Figure 4** shows that of the 37,974 post-primary students exempted from Irish in 2024 due to learning difficulties, 19,404 (51%) studied a foreign language.



**Figure 4.** Students who were exempted from the study of Irish in 2024 due to learning difficulties and who studied a foreign language.

Anuas air sin, tá riachtanais bhreise oideachais ag beagnach 10% de dhaltáí i mbunscoileanna lán-Ghaeilge ach níl siad sin ina mbac orthu dul chun cinn an-mhaith a dhéanamh sa Ghaeilge (Nic Aindriú et al., 2020; Nic Aindriú et al., 2024).

## TÁTÁIL

Feictear mar sin go bhfuil céatadán na ndaltaí díolmhaithe réasúnta seasmhach ag leibhéal na bunscoile ach gur tháinig fás 109% ar líon na ndaltaí a ndeonaíodh díolúine dóibh de bharr deacrachtaí foghlama ag leibhéal na hiar-bhunscoile ó 2017 i leith. Nuair a chuireadh an córas nua i bhfeidhm in 2019, gheall an Roinn Oideachais nach ndeonófaí díolúintí ach amháin i gcásanna annamha agus eisceachtúla. Ní dóigh liom gur féidir a mhaíomh go bhfuil ráta de 14.3% de dhaltáí iar-bhunscoile annamh nó eisceachtúil. Bhí 60,946 dalta díolmhaithe ón nGaeilge ag an iar-bhunleibhéal in 2024 mar a léiríodh i dTábla 2. Sa tréimhse chéanna, bhí 12,110 scoláire cláráithe i ngaelcholáistí agus in aonaid/sruthanna lasmuigh den Ghaeltacht (An Roinn Oideachais agus Óige, 2025). **Fágann sé sin go bhfuil 5 scoláire díolmhaithe ón nGaeilge ag an iar-bhunleibhéal lasmuigh den Ghaeltacht in aghaidh gach scoláire atá ag fáil oideachas trí Ghaeilge. Tá an bonn á bhaint de dhea-obair an ghaeloideachais ag na díolúintí.**

In addition, almost 10% of pupils in Irish-medium primary schools have additional educational needs but this do not prevent them from making very good progress in Irish (Nic Aindriú et al., 2020; Nic Aindriú et al., 2024).

## SUMMARY

The percentage of exempted pupils is therefore seen to be relatively stable at primary level, but the number of students granted an exemption has grown by 109% due to learning difficulties at post-primary level since 2017. When the new system was implemented in 2019, the Department of Education committed to granting exemptions only in rare and exceptional cases. It stretches credibility to claim that a rate of 14.3% of post-primary students is rare or exceptional. 60,946 students were exempted from Irish at post-primary level in 2024 as shown in Table 2. In the same period, there were 12,110 students enrolled in gaelcholáistí and Irish-medium units/streams outside the Gaeltacht (Department of Education and Youth, 2025a). **This means that 5 students are exempt from Irish at post-primary level outside the Gaeltacht for every student who is receiving education through Irish. The good work of Irish-medium education is being undermined by exemptions from the study of Irish.**

# CUR CHUIGE IONCHUIMSITHEACH



Bhí an Roinn Oideachais le moladh as an bpolasaí imeasctha a cuireadh i bhfeidhm sna 1990aidí ach is mór an fhorbairt atá tar éis teacht ar ár dtuiscint ar riachtanais bhreise oideachais, agus ar ár gcumas diagnóis a dhéanamh agus tacaíocht a thabhairt do dhaltaí ó shin i leith. Tá líon na ndaltaí sna ranganna tar éis laghdú go mór agus foireann thacaíochta idir múinteoirí tacaíochta foghlama agus cúntóirí riachtanais speisialta tar éis fás go mór. Tá ár dtuiscint ar fhoghlaim na litearthachta agus ar fhoghlaim teangacha breise tar éis forbairt go mór chomh maith. Níor aithníodh na forbairtí seo, áfach, san athbhreithniú agus sa chomhairliúchán poiblí in 2018/2019 agus bhí próiseas fabhtach ann dá bharr. Tá an córas reatha a bhí mar thoradh ar an bpróiseas sin bunaithe ar thaighde, ar thuiscint ar an ionchuimsitheacht, agus ar dhearcadh ar an nGaeilge a bhí agus atá as dáta.

Tá an contrárthacht sin le feiceáil go soiléir i gcáipéisíocht na Roinne Oideachais. Leagtar amach cur chuige ionchuimsitheach oideachais na Roinne Oideachais agus Óige i gCuraclam Teanga na Bunscoile: "Is do mhúinteoirí gach páiste, beag beann ar chumas, i ngach comhthéacs scoile é an curaclam – scoileanna Gaeltachta, scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge, scoileanna Béarla agus scoileanna speisialta" (An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna, 2019, p. 4).

Nuair a bhíonn deacrachtaí foghlama ag dalta moltar cur chuige difreáilte a chur i bhfeidhm: **"cur chuige lena ndírítear ar riachtanais shainaitheanta na bpáistí a bhfuil riachtanais speisialta oideachais acu"** (An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna, 2019, p. 10). An tuiscint a bhainfeadh formhór d'oideachasóirí as an ráiteas sin ná gur ghá an curaclam agus an cur chuige teagaisc a chur in oiriúint do riachtanais an dalta seachas an dualgas a bheith ar an dalta iad féin a chur in oiriúint don chóras.

Mar a dúirt Jim Rose:

**"Dyslexia is a different brain organisation that needs different teaching methods. It is never the fault of the child, but rather the responsibility of us who teach to find methods that work for that child."**

# AN INCLUSIVE APPROACH



The Department of Education was to be commended for the integration policy it implemented in the 1990s, but our understanding of additional educational needs, and our ability to diagnose and support students, has developed substantially since then. The pupil-teacher ratio has decreased significantly and support staff, between learning support teachers and special needs assistants, has grown significantly. Our understanding of literacy learning and the learning of additional languages has also developed considerably. However, these developments were not recognised in the review or public consultation in 2018/2019 which led to a flawed process. The current system that was the result of that process is based on outdated research, an outdated understanding of inclusion, and an outdated view of the Irish language.

This contradiction is clearly evident in the Department of Education's documentation. The Department of Education and Youth's inclusive education approach is set out in the Primary Language Curriculum: "The Primary Language Curriculum is for teachers of children of all abilities in all school contexts. The school contexts for this curriculum include English-medium schools, Gaeltacht schools, Irish-medium schools and special schools" (Department of Education and Skills, 2019, p. 6).

When a student has learning difficulties, it is recommended to apply, **"A differentiated approach which focuses on the identified needs of children with special educational needs will involve planning at individual-teacher and whole-school levels"** (Department of Education and Skills, 2019, p. 23). Most educators would understand that the curriculum and teaching approach would need to be adapted to the needs of the student rather than the student having to adapt to the system.

As Jim Rose said:

**"Dyslexia is a different brain organisation that needs different teaching methods. It is never the fault of the child, but rather the responsibility of us who teach to find methods that work for that child."**

Nuair a dheonaítear díolúine ar dhaltaí, tugtar le tuiscint dóibh go bhfuil rud éigin nach féidir leo a dhéanamh agus go bhfuil siad difriúil ó dhaltaí eile. Léiríonn sé dóibh nach bhfuil an córas in ann teacht ar bhealaí teagaisc a oibríonn dóibh agus go gcaithfidimid curaclam laghdaithe a chur i bhfeidhm. Is féidir leis seo drochthionchar a imirt ar fhéiniomhá an dalta agus na deiseanna saoil atá acu a theorannú. Go deimhin, tá an tuiscint i measc go leor daltaí, tuismitheoirí, múinteoirí agus príomhoidí, má bhíonn scór agat ag nó faoi bhun an 10ú peircintil in aon cheann de Léitheoireacht Focal, Léamhthuiscint nó Litriú nach bhfuil tú in ann an Ghaeilge a fhoghlaim rud nach bhfuil aon tacaíocht dó sa taighde. **Ní raibh aon bhunús eolaíoch le scoithphointe an 10ú peircintil a bheith roghnaithe agus léiríonn líon na ndíolúintí atá á ndeonú faoi gcóras ó 2019 i leith go bhfuil an critéar ró-scaoilte.** Níor aontaigh Cumann Disléicse na hÉireann (DAI) leis an gcur chuige seo ina aighneacht don phróiseas comhairliúcháin in 2018/19: "Any cut-off on a discrete test (one test, of one skill, on one day) is inherently flawed and will unfairly penalise some people."

Sa ghearrthréimhse, d'fhéadfadh daltaí faoiseamh a fháil mar go bhfuil brú áirithe bainte díobh ach ní hionann díolúine agus tacaíocht. Is éard a theastaíonn ó dhaltaí a bhfuil deacrachtaí foghlama acu ná tacaíocht ghníomhach atá curtha in oiriúint dóibh. I gcás dhaltaí a bhfuil deacrachtaí litearthachta acu agus iad ag foghlaim an dara teanga, teastaíonn cur chuige teagaisc a leagann béim ar scileanna labhartha agus éisteachta, dóthain teagmhála leis an teanga, agus neart deiseanna úsáide. Is cur chuige é seo a théann chun sochair gach dalta ar a dtugtar dearadh Uilíoch don Fhoghlaim (DUF) (Universal Design for Learning UDL).

Maíonn an Roinn Oideachais agus go deimhin leagtar amach sna ciorcláin chuí go mba chóir deiseanna a thabhairt do dhaltaí díolmhaithe leanúint orthu ag foghlaim na Gaeilge mar a fheictear sna sleachta thíos as na ciorcláin do bhunscoileanna agus d'iar-bhunscoileanna.

***"De réir pholasaí na Roinne táthar ag súil agus moltar dóibh gach dalta a chur ar fáil, a mhéid is féidir agus ar bhealach fiúntach, le deiseanna páirt a ghlacadh i ngníomhaíochtaí Gaeilge agus cultúrtha ag leibhéal atá oiriúnach dá riachtanais foghlama."* (An Roinn Oideachais, 2022a, p. 3)**

***"De réir mar a théann scoláirí ar aghaidh ar a n-aistear foghlama teanga i dtreo na sraithe sinsearaí, tugtar deiseanna dóibh gabháil tuilleadh do Ghaeilge ar leibhéal atá oiriúnach dá riachtanais trí na cláir éagsúla a thairgtear."* (An Roinn Oideachais, 2022b, p. 3)**

When students are granted an exemption, they are given the message that there is something they cannot do and that they are different from other students. It shows them that the system is unable to find ways of teaching that work for them and that we need to implement a reduced curriculum. This can have a negative impact on the student's self-image and limit their life opportunities. In fact, there is the understanding among many students, parents, teachers and principals that if you score at or below the 10th percentile in a Word Reading, Reading Comprehension or Spelling test, then you are unable to learn Irish, which is not supported by the research. **There was no scientific basis for choosing the 10th percentile as a cut-off point and the number of exemptions granted under the new system since 2019 shows that the criterion is too loose.** The Dyslexia Society of Ireland (DAI) did not agree with this approach in its submission to the consultation process in 2018/19: "Any cut-off on a discrete test (one test, of one skill, on one day) is inherently flawed and will unfairly penalise some people."

In the short term, students may get relief as a result of an exemption because some pressure has been reduced, but an exemption does not constitute support. Students with learning difficulties need active support tailored to their needs. For students with literacy difficulties learning a second language, a teaching approach needs to emphasise speaking and listening skills, provide exposure to sufficient contact with the language, and provide ample opportunities for language use. This is an approach that benefits all students known as Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

The Department of Education and Youth claims, and indeed the relevant circulars set out that exempted students should be given opportunities to continue learning Irish as seen in the extracts below from the circulars for primary and post-primary schools.

***"In line with the Department's policy schools are expected and encouraged to provide all pupils, to the greatest extent possible and in a meaningful way, with opportunities to participate in Irish language and cultural activities at a level appropriate to their learning needs." (Department of Education, 2022a, p. 3)***

***"As students progress along their language learning journey into senior cycle, they are provided with opportunities to engage further with Irish at a level appropriate to their needs through a variety of programmes offered." (Department of Education, 2022b pp. 2-3)***

Baineann na moltaí seo le ranganna speisialta do phaistí uathacha freisin (An Roinn Oideachais agus Óige, 2025b). Go deimhin, tá se i gceist ag an Roinn Oideachais agus Óige:

***"Treoir a chur ar fáil do scoileanna agus do mhúinteoirí maidir le conas is féidir le gach leanbh agus duine óg rochtain a fháil ar fhoghlaim na Gaeilge laistigh de chreat an Chontanaim Tacaíochta. Ba cheart an treoir seo a bheith ailínithe le prionsabail an oideachais ionchuimsithigh agus an Dearaidh Uilíoch don Fhoghlaim, cleachtais oideolaíochta éifeachtacha, agus feidhmiú na gCiorclán maidir le Díolúintí ó Staidéar ar an nGaeilge i scoileanna."* (An Roinn Oideachais agus Óige, 2025c, lch 23)**

Ach tuigimid ó thuairiscí na ndaltaí agus na múinteoirí nach gcuirtear na moltaí seo i bhfeidhm. Tá an Roinn ag iarraidh é a bheith ina ghruth is ina mheadhg acu. **Ag maíomh ar lámh amháin go bhfuil polasáí ionchuimsitheach i bhfeidhm agus ar an lámh eile ag bronnadh díolúintí ó staidéar na Gaeilge nach bhfuil ag teacht le polasáí ionchuimsitheach.** Is í an fhirinne ag leibhéal na bunscoile gur minic a deir daltaí le múinteoirí go ndeir a dtuismitheoirí leo nach bhfuil cead acu Gaeilge a fhoghlaim agus go ndéanfadh sé dochar dóibh páirt a ghlacadh sa rang Gaeilge. Is sampla é seo den mhíthuiscint a scaipeann córas míchuí na ndíolúintí. Ag leibhéal na hiar-bhunscoile, **deir go leor príomhoidí le tuismitheoirí na ndaltaí atá le clárú ina scoileanna agus a bhfuil deacrachtaí foghlama acu go gcaithfidh siad rogha a dhéanamh idir staidéar na Gaeilge agus tacaíocht foghlama a fháil dá bpáistí.** Leagtar brú ar thuismitheoirí sa tslí seo iarratas a dhéanamh ar dhíolúine ó staidéar na Gaeilge dá bpáistí. Mar chosaint ar an gcleachtas seo, deir príomhoidí iar-bhunscoile nach bhfuil na hacmhainní acu an dá thrá a fhreastal. Ach ceann de na hiarmhairtí a bhíonn i gcórais ina gceadaítear díolúine ó ábhair áirithe ná nach gá do na córais sin na hacmhainní breise a chur ar fáil ná an oiliúint a chur ar na múinteoirí le go mbeidís in ann freastal ar riachtanais gach uile dhalta. Ní bhíonn brú ar na múinteoirí teacht ar bhealaí agus ar chuir chuige teagaisc a thacódh le foghlaimeoirí ar leith (Wight, 2015).

These recommendations also apply to special classes for autistic children (Department of Education and Youth, 2025b). In fact, the Department of Education and Youth:

***"Provide guidance to schools and teachers on how all children and young people can access the learning of Irish within the Continuum of Support framework. This guidance should be aligned with the principles of inclusive education and Universal Design for Learning, effective pedagogical practices and the implementation of the Circulars on Exemptions from the Study of Irish in schools."* (Department of Education and Youth, 2025c, p. 23)**

But we understand from the reports of students, parents and teachers that these recommendations are not implemented. **The department wants to have it both ways, claiming on the one hand that an inclusive policy is in place and on the other hand, granting exemptions from the study of Irish which are not in line with an inclusive education policy.** The reality is that at primary level, students often tell teachers that their parents instruct them that they are not allowed to learn Irish and that it would be harmful for them to participate in Irish classes. This is an example of the misunderstandings that the inappropriate system of exemptions spreads. At post-primary level, **many principals tell parents of students who are due to enrol in their schools, and who have learning difficulties, that they need to choose between studying Irish and receiving learning support for their children.** In this way, parents are forced to apply for an exemption from the study of Irish for their children. In defending this practice, post-primary principals say that they do not have the resources to cater for learning needs and teaching Irish. However, one of the consequences of systems that allow exemption from certain subjects is that these systems are not required to provide the additional resources or to upskill the teachers to be able to meet the needs of each and every student. Teachers are under no pressure to find ways and approaches to teach that would support individual learners (Wight, 2015).

## Traschur Scileanna ó Theanga Amháin go Teanga Eile

Tá daoine ann a mhaíonn go gcabhraíonn díolúine ó staidéar na Gaeilge le daltaí díriú isteach ar scileanna litearthachta i dteanga amháin, an Béarla sa chás seo, agus gur féidir leo na scileanna sin a thraschur go teangacha eile ar ball. Is dearcadh aonteangach ar an bhfoghlaim é seo agus níl tacaíocht dó sa taighde reatha. Faoin dearcadh seo, leagtar béim ar na laigí atá ag daltaí de bharr a gcuid riachtanas breise seachas ar a gcuid buanna. Tá eolas le fada ann gur féidir scileanna litearthachta a thraschur ó theanga go teanga (Cummins, 1979) agus tá Curaclam Teanga na Bunscoile bunaithe ar an bprionsabal seo (Ó Duibhir & Cummins, 2012). Léiríonn an taighde is déanaí go bhfuil ag éirí le daltaí a bhfuil deacrachtaí litearthachta acu dul i ngleic le teangacha breise agus go bhfuil torthaí chomh maith nó níos fearr acu sa chéad teanga is atá ag a bpiaraí nach ndéanann staidéar ach ar theanga amháin (Steinlen & Piske, 2025). Léiríonn taighde eile go gcuidíonn tacaíocht sa dara teanga (T2) le daltaí a bhfuil riachtanais bhreise acu le scileanna díchódaithe an T1 (Abu-Rabia & Bluestein-Danon, 2012; Abu-Rabia et al., 2013; Andreou & Segklia, 2019). Ní fíor an maíomh mar sin nach bhfuil daltaí in ann dul i ngleic le dhá chód ag an am céanna agus gur ghá foghlaim na Gaeilge a chur ar leataobh. Léiríonn an taighde go mbíonn dea-thionchar ag foghlaim scileanna litearthachta T2 ar scileanna litearthachta T1 fiú amháin le T1 Béarla a bhfuil ortagrafaíocht dhomhain aige. Meastar go dtarlaíonn sé seo de bharr na ngníomhaíochtaí litearthachta a bheith méadaithe seachas laghdaithe. **Tarlaíonn traschur scileanna ó theanga amháin go teangacha eile ach níl aon fhianaise ann gur ghá díriú isteach ar theanga amháin ag an am.** Tá an deis a bheith dátheangach á ceilt ar dhaltaí a bhfuil riachtanais bhreise oideachais acu in Éirinn gan aon fhianaise taighde agus neamhaird á déanamh ar fhianaise a léiríonn a mhalairt.

## CLEACHTAS I DTÍORTHA EILE

Níl an cur chuige in Éirinn maidir le díolúintí ag teacht leis an gcleachtas i dtíortha eile. **Díolúine buan atá i gceist in Éirinn mar atá pléite thuas, ach sna cásanna eisceachtúla i dtíortha eile ina ndeonaítear díolúine, is díolúine sealadach a bhíonn ann má a phléitear thíos.**

## The Transfer of Skills Across Languages

There are those who claim that an exemption from the study of Irish helps students to focus on literacy skills in one language, in this case English, and that they can later transfer these skills to other languages. This view is based on a monolingual view of learning and is not supported by current research. This approach highlights the students' weaknesses due to their additional needs rather than their strengths. It has long been understood that literacy skills can be transferred from across languages (Cummins, 1979) and the Primary Language Curriculum is based on this principle (Ó Duibhir & Cummins, 2012). The latest research shows that students with literacy difficulties are able to engage with additional languages and have as good or better results in their first language as their peers who study only one language (Steinlen & Piske, 2025). Other research shows that support in the second language (L2) helps students with additional needs with their L1 decoding skills (Abu-Rabia & Bluestein-Danon, 2012; Abu-Rabia et al., 2013; Andreou & Segklia, 2019). It is not true that students are not able to cope with two codes at the same time and that the learning of Irish had to be set aside. The research shows that learning L2 literacy skills has a positive impact on L1 literacy skills even with an orthographically deep L1 such as English. This occurs due to increased rather than reduced literacy activities. **The transfer of skills from one language to another takes place but there is no evidence for the need to focus on only one language at a time.** Students with additional educational needs in Ireland are being deprived of the opportunity to be bilingual without any research evidence to support the practice while disregarding evidence to the contrary.

## PRACTICE IN OTHER COUNTRIES

Not only is the approach to exemptions in Ireland out of line with current research, but it is also out of line with the practice in other countries. **An exemption from Irish is permanent in Ireland as discussed above, but in the exceptional cases in other countries where an exemption is granted, it is temporary as discussed below.**

## An Bhreatain Bheag

Níl aon chóras foirmiúil sa Bhreatain Bheag le díolúine ó staidéar na Breataine a lorg agus is ábhar éigeantach é go leibhéal GCSE ag aois 16 bliain fiú amháin do dhaltáí a bhogann go dtí an Bhreatain Bheag ó thíortha eile. In áit díolúine, déanann daltaí a bhfuil deacrachtaí foghlama acu nó a thagann déanach chuig staidéar ar an mBreatain mar chroí-ábhar GCSE Core Cymraeg,<sup>[1]</sup> an tsonraíocht atá ann do scoileanna meán-Bhéarla. Tá rogha ag daltaí i scoileanna meán-Breataine staidéar a dhéanamh ar GCSE Cymraeg Language and Literature,<sup>[2]</sup> mar cháilíocht amháin nó mar cháilíocht dúbailte. Faoi mar a dhéantar in Éirinn do na scrúdaithe stáit, is féidir le daltaí cur isteach ar shocruithe réasúntamá bhíonn riachtanais ar leith acu. Feictear mar sin go bhfuil múineadh na Breataine curtha in oiriúint do riachtanais na bhfoghlaimeoirí seachas do riachtanais an chórais amháin agus ní shéantar deis foghlama na Breataine ar aon dhalta.

## An Fhionlainn

Tá staidéar na Sualainnise mar mhionteanga éigeantach sa Fhionlainn. Cuirtear socruithe speisialta i bhfeidhm do dhaltáí a bhfuil disléicse nó deacrachtaí foghlama eile acu, m.sh., am sa bhreis le linn na scrúduithe stáit. Bítear ag súil go bhfoghlaimeodh daltaí nua chun na tíre an Fhionlainnis agus an tSualainnis ach go dtugtar faoi i mbealach solúbtha. Is fíorannamh a deonaítear díolúine ó staidéar na Sualainnise agus sa chás go mbronntar ceann is ar chúinsí leighis de ghnáth.

## An Chatalóinis sa Spáinn

Is í an Chatalóinis an teanga teagaisc do gach uile dhalta sa Chatalóin. Má thagann dalta déanach go dtí an réigiún is féidir leo díolúine sealadach ó scrúduithe a lorg ar feadh bliain nó dhó. Ní mór dóibh freastal ar ranganna sa ghnáthshlí le deis a thabhairt dóibh breith suas ar a bpiaraí.

## Málta

Tá dhá theanga oifigiúil i Málta, an Mháltais agus an Béarla is tá staidéar na dá theanga sin éigeantach. Leagtar amach go soiléir sa dlí nach mbeidh aon dalta díolmhaithe ó staidéar na Máltaise nóan Béarla beag beann ar an tréimhse ama atá caite acu sa tír. Cuirtear clár ionductaithe ar fáil do dhaltáí a thagann déanach chun na tíre ar feadh bliain nó dhó. Má bhíonn disléicse trom ar dhalta cuireann múinteoir tacaíochta foghlama tacaíocht ar fáil don dalta sin laistigh den rang Máltaise seachas díolúine a bhronnadh.

[1] <https://www.wjec.co.uk/media/rdhblgp0/cbac-tgau-core-cymraeg-manyleb-e-240425.pdf>

[2] <https://www.wjec.co.uk/media/hysc5tin/wjec-gcse-iaith-a-llynyddiaeth-gymraeg-specification.pdf>

## Wales

There is no formal system in Wales to seek an exemption from the study of Welsh and it is a compulsory subject to GCSE level at the age of 16, even for students who move to Wales from other countries. Instead of an exemption, students who have learning difficulties or come late to Wales, study Welsh as a core subject GCSE Core Cymraeg.<sup>[1]</sup> Students in Welsh-medium schools have the option of studying GCSE Cymraeg Language and Literature,<sup>[2]</sup> either as a single or as a double qualification. As in Ireland for the state examinations, students can apply for reasonable accommodations if they have particular needs. In summary, the teaching of Welsh is tailored to the needs of the learners rather than the needs of the system and no student is denied the opportunity to learn Welsh.

## Finland

The study of Swedish as a minority language is compulsory in Finland. Special arrangements are put in place for students with dyslexia or other learning difficulties, e.g., extra time during the state examinations. Students who are new to Finland are expected to learn Finnish and Swedish but this is done in a flexible way. Exemption from the Swedish study is very rarely granted and where one is granted it is usually for medical reasons.

## Catalan in Spain

Catalan is the language of instruction for all students in Catalonia. If a student arrives late to the region, they can seek a temporary exemption from examinations for a year or two. They must attend classes in the usual way to give them the opportunity to catch up on their peers.

## Malta

There are two official languages in Malta, Maltese and English and the study of these two languages is compulsory. The law clearly sets out that no student will be exempt from the study of Maltese or English regardless of the period of time they have spent in the country. An induction programme is provided for students who arrive late to the country for a year or two. If a student experiences severe dyslexia a learning support teacher provides support to that student as part of the Maltese class rather than granting an exemption.

[1] <https://www.wjec.co.uk/media/rdhblgp0/cbac-tgau-core-cymraeg-manyleb-e-240425.pdf>

[2] <https://www.wjec.co.uk/media/hysc5tin/wjec-gcse-iaith-a-llenyddiaeth-gymraeg-specification.pdf>

## Lucsamburg

Tá trí theanga oifigiúil i Lucsamburg, an Lucsambuirgis, an Fhraincis agus an Ghearmáinis is tá staidéar na dtrí theangaéigeantach. Os rud é go bhfuil daonra na tíre tritheangach, scoithfí amach aon dhalta a ndeonófaí díolúine dóibh. Má thagann fadhb tromchúiseach disléicse chun cinn, cuirtear curaclam solúbtha ar fáil don dalta.

## An Ghearmáin

Sa Ghearmáin tá staidéar ar dhá theanga iasachta riachtanach don Abitur, scrúdú atá cosúil leis an Ardteistiméireacht in Éirinn nó an Baccalaureate Idirnáisiúnta. An gnáthnós sa chás go bhfuil disléicse ar dhalta ná socruithe réasúnta a dhéanamh don dalta agus gan aird a thabhairt ar bhotúin ghramadaí agus litrithe faoi mar a dhéantar sna scrúduithe stáir in Éirinn.

## An Fhrainc

Tá staidéar ar dhá theanga iasachta riachtanach sa Fhrainc chomh maith. Má bhíonn deacrachtaí tromchúiseacha ag daltaí le litearthacht ar nós disléicse nó diosfáise, is féidir leo iarratas foirmiúil a dhéanamh ar dhíolúine ón dara teanga iasachta. Baintear feidhm as múnla cliniciúil sna cásanna seo agus bíonn ar an roinn míchumais réigiúnach comhad a chur leis an iarratas chomh maith le moladh ó dhochtúir. In áit iarratas a dhéanamh ar dhíolúine ó staidéar an dara teanga iasachta, is minic go gcuirfeadh an scoil socruithe oiriúnaithe i bhfeidhm.

# TÁTÁIL

**Tá an cleachtas in Éirinn uathúil mar go mbreathnaítear ar an nGaeilge mar ábhar gur féidir le dalta a bheith díolmhaithe de go buan.** Sa Bhreatain Bheag, sa Fhionlainn, sa Chatalóin, i Malta agus i Lucsamburg, breathnaítear ar staidéar na dteangacha sin mar cheart agus mar dhualgas. Sa Ghearmáin agus sa Fhrainc déanann gach dalta staidéar ar dhá theanga iasachta agus cé go ndeonáítear díolúine i gcásanna fioreisceachtúla, an gnáthnós ná socruithe oiriúnaithe a chur i bhfeidhm. An fhealsúnacht atá mar bhunús do na cuir chuige seo ná go mba chóir go mbeadh rochtain ag gach dalta ar an teanga(acha) agus cuirtear an córas in oiriúint do riachtanais an dalta. Is dea-shamplaí iad de chleachtas ionchuisitheach á chur i bhfeidhm a d'fhéadfadh a bheith ina n-eiseamláir d'Éirinn. Nuair is gá, cuirtear socruithe sealadacha i bhfeidhm chun tacú leis na daltaí seachas 'réiteach' buan nadiólúine in Éirinn. Anuas air sin, sna cásanna fioreisceachtúla ina ndeonáítear díolúine, teastaíonn an-chuid fianaise faoi mhúnla cliniciúil. Bheadh an múnla a chleachtar i dtíortha eile ag teacht le moladh Comhchoiste na Gaeilge, na Gaeltachta agus Phobal Labhartha na Gaeilge in 2024:

## Luxembourg

Luxembourg has three official languages, Luxembourgish, French and German, and the study of the three languages is compulsory. As the population of the country is trilingual, any student who might be granted an exemption would be excluded from society. If a serious dyslexia problem arises, the student is provided with a flexible curriculum.

## Germany

In Germany, the study of two foreign languages is required for the Abitur, an examination similar to the Leaving Certificate in Ireland or the International Baccalaureate. The normal practice where a student has dyslexia is to make reasonable arrangements for the student and to disregard grammar and spelling mistakes as in the case in state examinations in Ireland.

## France

The study of two foreign languages is also required in France. If students with literacy difficulties such as dyslexia or dysphasia experience serious difficulties, they can formally apply for an exemption from the second foreign language. A clinical model is used in these cases, and the regional disability department is required to add a file to the application as well as a doctor's recommendation. Instead of applying for an exemption from the study of a second foreign language, the school will often implement adapted arrangements.

## SUMMARY

**The practice of exemptions in Ireland is unique as Irish is viewed as a subject that a student can be permanently exempt from.** In Wales, Finland, Catalonia, Malta and Luxembourg, the study of regional and minority languages is regarded as a right and a duty. In Germany and France all student study two foreign languages and although exemption is granted in very exceptional cases, the norm is to implement adapted arrangements. The philosophy behind these approaches is that all students should have access to the language(s) and the system is adapted to the needs of the student. They are good examples of applying an inclusive education approach that serve as exemplars for Ireland. Where necessary, temporary arrangements are put in place to support students rather than the permanent 'solution' of the exemption in Ireland. In addition, in the very exceptional cases where an exemption is granted, a high level of evidence using a clinical model must be provided. The model practised in other countries would be in line with the recommendation of Comhchoiste na Gaeilge, na Gaeltachta agus Phobal Labhartha na Gaeilge in 2024:

*“Tá an Comhchoiste go mór den tuairim gurb iad síceolaithe oideachais na Roinne Oideachais an t-aon dream amháin atá cáilithe agus oilte chun tabhairt faoin obair seo agus nach bhfuil an cháilíocht ná an oiliúint ag príomhoidí scoile a leithéid de chinneadh a dhéanamh. Sa chás eisceachtúil gur léirítear nach féidir le daltaí na deacrachtaí foghlama sin a shárú, gur faoin síceolaí oideachais a bheadh sé an cinneadh sin a dhéanamh, ar an mbunús gur bailíodh fianaise chuimsitheach agus chríochnúil ar dheacrachtaí foghlama na ndaltaí sin – nár chóir go ndéanfaí an Ghaeilge a theagasc do na daltaí céanna.” (Comhchoiste na Gaeilge na Gaeltachta agus Phobal Labhartha na Gaeilge, 2024, p. 9)*

## IMPLEACHTAÍ NA DÍOLÚINE Ó STAIDEÁR NA GAEILGE

Aithníonn an Roinn Oideachais agus Óige “buntáistí an dátheangachais do gach dalta” (An Roinn Oideachais, 2022a, p. 2) agus “t[h]airbhí an dátheangachais do gach scoláire” (An Roinn Oideachais, 2022b) ina chuid ciorclán **ach séantar na buntáistí agus na tairbhí sin do dhaltaí nuair a dheonaítear díolúine**. Nuair a chomhairlíonn príomhoide iarbhunscoile do thuismitheoirí Rang 6 rogha na díolúine a ghlacadh le gur féidir tacaíocht foghlama a chur ar fáil dá bpáiste, séantar na buntáistí sin ar na daltaí, séantar na buntáistí cognaíocha a bhaineann leis an dátheangachas, séantar léargas níos doimhne ar a n-oidhreacht orthu, séantar cuid da bhféiniúlacht orthu, séantar na deiseanna gairme agus sóisialta a bhronnfadh cumas sa Ghaeilge orthu, séantar an deis orthu freastal ar chúrsa Gaeltachta, séantar an deis orthu cabhrú lena bpáistí féin Gaeilge a fhoghlaim amach anseo. Anuas air sin, tugtar an teachtaireacht dóibh go bhfuil laigí iontu, nach bhfuil siad cumasach go leor le Gaeilge a fhoghlaim, nach bhfuil siad cumasach go leor teangacha eile a fhoghlaim a gcúngaíonn a roghanna taisteal thar lear orthu. Níl siad ábalta ach do churaclam laghdaithe.

Toisc nach gcuirtear deiseanna ar fáil do dhaltaí a thagann chun na hÉireann tar éis 12 bliain d’aois, séantar go leor de na nithe céanna a liostáladh thuas orthu. Séantar an deis imeasctha a bhronnfadh bunchumas sa Ghaeilge orthu, séantar an deis orthu teanga eile a fhoghlaim a chuirfeadh le líon na dteangacha atá sealbhaithe acu cheana féin mar chainteoirí ilteangacha. Tugtar an teachtaireacht dóibh nach bhfuil an Ghaeilge tábhachtach agus nach gcuireann muintir na hÉireann luach uirthi faoi mar a dhéantar ar mhionteangacha i dtíortha eile.

*"The Comhchoiste is of the opinion that the Department of Education's educational psychologists are the only individuals who are qualified and trained to undertake this work and that school principals do not have the qualifications or training to make such a decision. In the exceptional case that it is demonstrated that students cannot overcome these learning difficulties, it would be for the educational psychologist to make that decision, on the basis that comprehensive and thorough evidence of the learning difficulties of those students was gathered – that the Irish language should not be taught to the same students." (Comhchoiste na Gaeilge na Gaeltachta agus Phobal Labhartha na Gaeilge, 2024, p. 9)*

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE EXEMPTION FROM THE STUDY OF IRISH

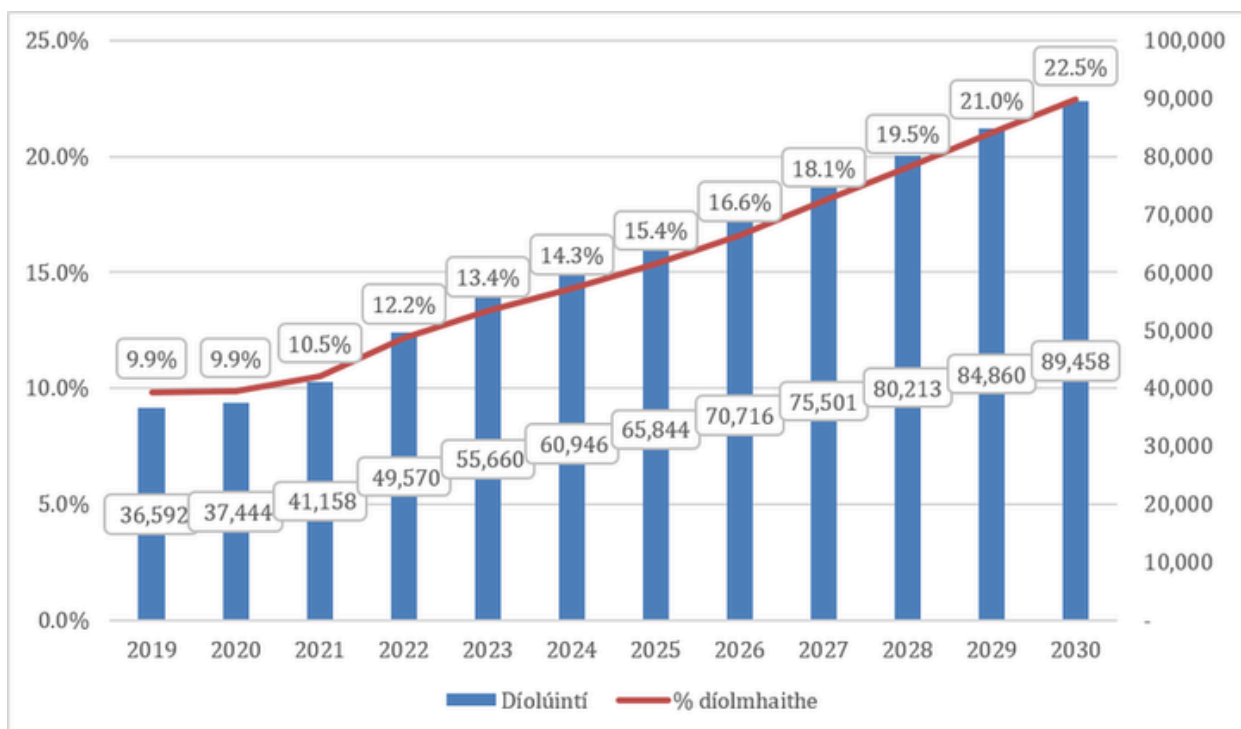
The Department of Education and Youth recognises "the benefits of bilingualism for all pupils" (Department of Education, 2022a, p. 2) and "the benefits of bilingualism for all students" (Department of Education, 2022b, p. 2) in its circulars **but denies these benefits to students when an exemption is granted**. When a post-primary principal advises Sixth Class parents to opt for an exemption for their child in order to receive learning support, the students are denied these benefits, they are denied the cognitive benefits of bilingualism, they are denied a deeper insight into their heritage, they are denied part of their identity, they are denied the career and social opportunities that would derive from an ability in Irish, they are denied the opportunity to attend a Gaeltacht course, they are denied the opportunity to help their own children with their Irish homework in the future. In addition, they are given the message that there are things they cannot do, that they cannot learn Irish, that they are not capable of learning many other languages which narrows their future travel choices. That they are only able to cope with a reduced curriculum.

As students arriving in Ireland after the age of 12 years are not provided with the opportunity to learn Irish, they are denied many of the opportunities listed above. They are also denied the opportunity to learn another language which would increase the number of languages they have already acquired as multilingual speakers. The message is given to them that the Irish language is not important and that Irish people do not value Irish in the way minority languages are valued in other countries.

[3] Text translated from Irish.

# FÁS MEASTA AG AN IAR-BHUNLEIBHÉAL

Sa rannóg seo, ríomhtar na figiúirí réamh-mheasta do líon na ndíolúintí a bhronnfar má leanann an fás céanna is a bhí ann le cúig mbliana anuas, 2019–2024, an tréimhse ó tugadh córas nua na ndíolúintí isteach. Bunaithe ar an treocht sin, tháinig ardú 4,871 ar an meán ar líon na ndaltaí díolmhaithe ag leibhéal na hiar-bhunscoile gach bliain idir 2019 agus 2024. Baineadh úsáid as figiúirí réamh-mheasta na Roinne Oideachais agus Óige<sup>[3]</sup> (2025) don rollachán measta do dhaltaí iar-bhunscoile a léiríonn laghdú a bheith le teacht ar rollachán na scoláirí iar-bhunscoile go ceann 20 bliain. Laghdaíodh an meán-ardú de 4,871 i gcomhréir le figiúirí na Roinne Oideachais agus Óige. Feictear i bhFíor 5 go mbeadh 22.5% de dhaltaí díolmhaithe faoi 2030 de réir an tuair sin. Breis is duine amháin as gach cúigear díolmhaithe. Léiríonn sé seo an treo tubaisteach ina bhfuil cúrsaí ag dul mura nglacfar gníomh ar bhonn práinneach.

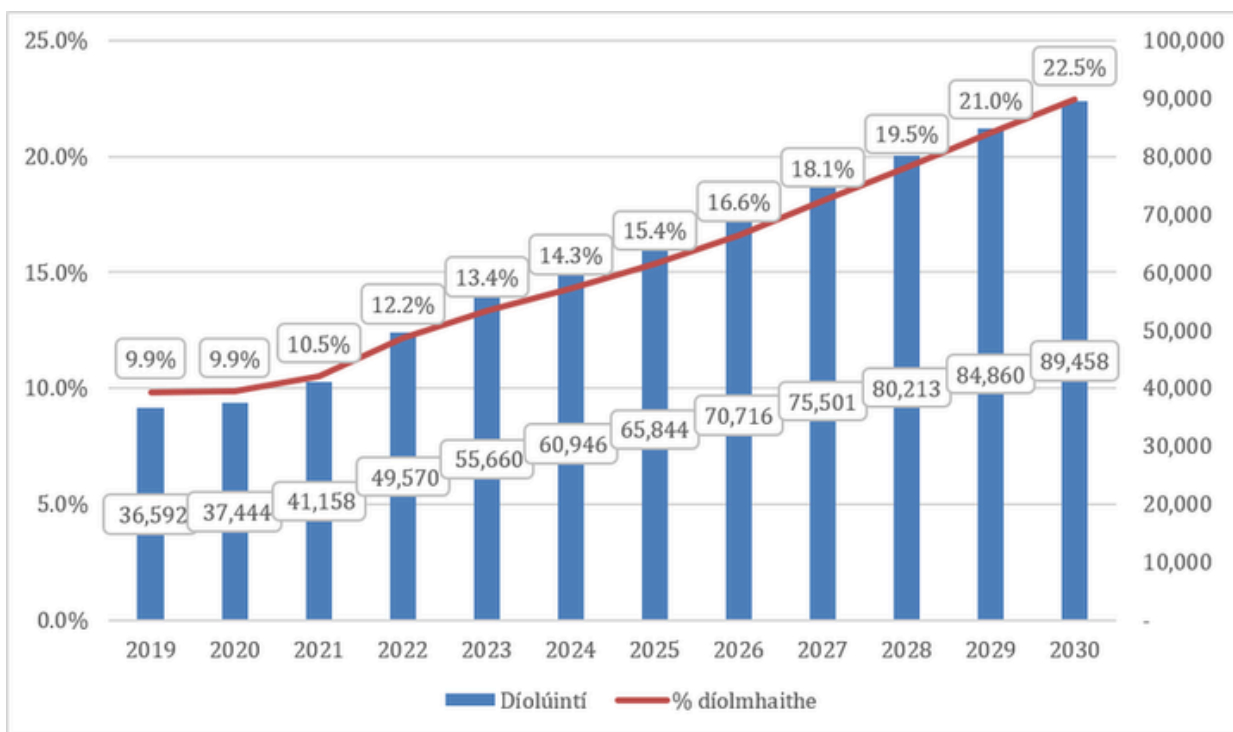


**Fíor 5.** Figiúirí ó 2017–2024 agus figiúirí réamh-mheasta ar threocht na ndíolúintí ó staidéar na Gaeilge ó 2025–2030

<sup>[3]</sup> [https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/ac1e81f3/Projections\\_of\\_full-time\\_enrolments\\_Primary\\_and\\_Post-Primary\\_level\\_2025\\_\\_2044.pdf](https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/ac1e81f3/Projections_of_full-time_enrolments_Primary_and_Post-Primary_level_2025__2044.pdf)

# THE ESTIMATED GROWTH OF EXEMPTIONS AT POST-PRIMARY LEVEL

In this section, a calculation is provided of the projected figures for the number of exemptions that will be granted if the growth over the last five years 2019-2024 continues. Based on the trend since the new system was introduced, the number of students exempted from Irish at post-primary level has increased, on average, by 4,871 each year between 2019 and 2024. The projected figures of the Department of Education and Youth<sup>[4]</sup> (2025) have been used for the estimated enrolment of post-primary students reflecting a decrease in the enrolment of post-primary students over the next 20 years. The average increase of 4,871 was reduced in line with the Department of Education and Youth's figures. **Figure 5** shows that 22.5% of students would be exempted from the study of Irish by 2030 according to this trend, equivalent to more than one in five students. This demonstrates the alarming trend if urgent action is not taken.



**Figure 5.** Figures from 2017-2024 and projected figures on the trend of exemptions from the study of Irish from 2025-2030

[4] [https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/ac1e81f3/Projections\\_of\\_full-time\\_enrolments\\_Primary\\_and\\_Post-Primary\\_level\\_2025\\_\\_2044.pdf](https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/ac1e81f3/Projections_of_full-time_enrolments_Primary_and_Post-Primary_level_2025__2044.pdf)

# CONCLÚID

**Léiríodh sa tuarascáil seo go bhfuil an córas faoina ndeonaítear díolúintí ó staidéar na Gaeilge ag an iar-bhunleibhéal ag fás as cuimse.** Níor tharla aon rud sa tréimhse 2019–2024 a thabharfadh le fios go bhfuil aon mhaolú ar an bhfás sin. Chonacthas go bhfuil Éire as riocht le hiliomad tíortha eile san Eoraip sa tslí ina ndeonaítear díolúintí buana seachas cinn shealadacha. Ní dhéantar ann soláthar do dhaltaí a thagann ó thar lear tar éis 12 bliain d’aois faoi mar a dhéantar ar fud na hEorpa. Fógraíonn an Roinn Oideachais agus Óige go bhfuil polasaí ionchuimsitheach i bhfeidhm i scoileanna na tíre seo, ach cuirtear an polasaí sin ar leataobh maidir le foghlaim na Gaeilge má bhíonn deacrachtaí foghlama nó má thagann daltaí déanach go dtí an córas. Taispeánadh nach bhfuil an polasaí seo ag teacht leis an taighde reatha agus é bunaithe cuid mhaith ar dhearcadh aonteach ar an saol agus easpa measa ar luach na Gaeilge. Ní gan dochar a bhfuil an polasaí seo á chur i bhfeidhm. Tugtar teachtaireacht dhiúltach do dhaltaí a bhfuil deacrachtaí foghlama acu. Tugtar teachtaireacht do dhaltaí ó thar lear nach bhfuil meas againn ar an nGaeilge agus gur cuma linn má fhoghlaimíonn siad faoinár gcultúr. Laghdaítear roghanna saoil agus imeasctha do na daltaí seo.

**Ach tá bealaí éalaithe as an tsáinn seo.** D’fhéadfaí tógáil ar an dea-threocht atá ann sna bunscoileanna agus deireadh a chur le díolúintí ag an leibhéal seo. Ina áit, d’fhéadfaí an cur chuige teagaisc a chur in oiriúint do riachtanais foghlama na ndaltaí, m.sh., i gcás dalta atá disléicseach, d’fhéadfaí laghdú a dhéanamh ar feadh tréimhse ar an teagmháil atá acu leis an bhfocal clóite i nGaeilge agus díriú ar na scileanna éisteachta agus labhartha. D’fhéadfaí tacaíocht foghlama a thabhairt dóibh le scileanna litearthachta na Gaeilge ina dhiaidh sin, rud a léiríonn an taighde go gcabhródh sé lena scileanna T1 freisin. Bheadh sé ríthábhachtach dar ndóigh go bhfaigheadh an dalta sin tacaíocht ó mhúinteoir tacaíochta foghlama sa rang Béarla. Mar a meabhraíodh thuas, ní hionann díolúine ó staidéar na Gaeilge agus tacaíocht ghníomhach do cibé riachtanas foghlama atá ag dalta. Bheadh an polasaí seo ag teacht leis an gcleachtas idirnáisiúnta is fearr. Is fiú a lua go bhfuil níos mó solúbthachta sa bhunscoil toisc nach bhfuil aon scrúduithe stáit i gceist.

San iar-bhunscoil d’fhéadfaí tarraingt ar an gcleachtas i dtíortha eile agus socruithe réasúnta a chur i bhfeidhm bunaithe ar riachtanais na ndaltaí chomh maith leis an gcur chuige teagaisc a leasú. Cuirtear socruithe réasúnta i bhfeidhm cheana féin sna scrúduithe stáit, m.sh. trí léitheoir nó scríobhaí a chur ar fáil nó neamhaird ar bhotúin litrithe agus ghramádaí srl.

# CONCLUSION

**This report showed that the system of granting exemptions from the study of Irish at post-primary level is growing exponentially.** Nothing has happened in the period from 2019-2024 that would suggest any decrease in this growth. It has been seen that Ireland is out of line with many other European countries in the way that permanent rather than temporary exemptions are granted. It does not provide for students coming from abroad after the age of 12 years as is done across Europe. The Department of Education and Youth proclaims that there is an inclusive education policy in place in our schools, but that policy is set aside in relation to the learning of Irish if there are learning difficulties or if students come late to the system. This policy has been shown to be inconsistent with current research and largely based on a monolingual view of the world and a lack of respect for the value of the Irish language. This policy is damaging and having a negative impact. Students with learning difficulties receive a negative message. Students from abroad are given a message that the Irish language is not valued and that we do not care whether they learn about our culture. Options for these students in later life and in integrating in Irish society are reduced.

**But there are solutions to this predicament.** The positive trend in primary schools could be built upon by removing exemptions entirely at this level. Instead, the teaching approach could be tailored to the learning needs of students, e.g., in the case of a pupil who is dyslexic, their contact with the printed word in Irish could be reduced for a period and the focus placed on listening and speaking skills. They could then be given learning support with Irish literacy skills, which the research shows would also help their L1 skills. Of course, it would be very important to have the support of a learning support teacher in English class. As highlighted above, an exemption from the study of Irish does not constitute active support for whatever learning need a student has. This policy would be in line with international best practice. It is worth noting that there is more flexibility in primary school as there are no state exams involved.

Post-primary schools could draw on the practice in other countries and implement reasonable accommodations based on students' needs as well as adjusting the teaching approach. Reasonable accommodations are already put in place in state examinations, e.g. by providing a reader or scribe, or disregarding spelling and grammar mistakes etc.

Ba ghá mar a dhéantar ar fud na hEorpa breathnú ar chúrsaí measúnaithe agus deimhin a dhéanamh de go mbeadh rogha sonraíochta ann a d'fheilfeadh do réimse leathan cumais faoi mar a dhéantar sa Bhreatain Bheag. **Chabhródh ailíniú leis an bhFráma Tagartha Comónta Eorpach go mór leis an bpróiseas seo.** D'fhéadfaí acmhainní teagaisc a fhorbairt do dhaltáí a bhíonn fásta suas go maith faoin am a dtagann siad chun cónaithe sa tír seo le go bhféadfaidís an Ghaeilge a fhoghlaim go leibhéal bunúsach ach díolúine shealadach a dheonú dóibh. Tá acmhainní den chineál seo á bhforbairt ag Gael-Linn ar scála beag do dhaltáí ó thuaidh nach bhfuil an Ghaeilge á dteagasc ina scoileanna. Is fiú cuimhneamh go mbronntar suas le 40% don bhéaltrial i scrúdú Gaeilge na hArdteistiméireachta.

I gcásanna fioreisceachtúla nach mbeadh na socrúithe seo oiriúnach, d'fhéadfaí moladh *Chomhchoiste na Gaeilge, na Gaeltachta agus Phobal Labhartha na Gaeilge in 2024* a leanúint agus dul i muinín saineolas síceolaithe oideachais na Roinne Oideachais agus Óige (NEPS). Bheadh an cur chuige seo ag teacht leis an gcleachtas a leantar i dtiortha na hEorpa a cheadaíonn díolúintí fioreisceachtúla ó fhoghlaim teangacha. Bheadh an rogha ann páirtdhíolúine a dheonú i gcásanna áirithe le go mbeadh rochtain ag an dalta ar scileanna áirithe teanga.

Mar a léiríodh sna treochtaí réamh-mheasta a cuireadh i láthair thuas, mura nglacfar gníomh go práinneach, bainfear tuilleadh de stádas na Gaeilge mar ábhar scoile éigeantach. Is rud 'comónta' é anois seachas 'annamh' nó 'eisceachtúil' díolúintí a dheonú. Deir urlabhraithe ón Roinn Oideachais agus Óige nach bhfuil sé mar pholasáí acu ábhar roghnach a dhéanamh den Ghaeilge ach is é sin a bheidh mar thoradh ar an bpolasáí reatha mura nglacfar gníomh. Dá dtarlódh sé sin is cinnte nach bhféadfaí sprioc an Rialtais faoi Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla (Leasú) 2021<sup>[4]</sup>, 20% d'earcaithe a bheith cumasach sa Ghaeilge. Deirtear go bhfuil borradh agus biseach faoin nGaeilge i measc an phobail (Flynn & Ó Murchadha, 2026) **ach tá fadhb sna hiar-bhunscoileanna a phléascfaidh gan rómhoill. Is féidir an staid thubaisteach sin a sheachaint ach na moltaí thíos a chur i bhfeidhm.**

[4] <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2021/act/49/enacted/ga/html>

It would be necessary, as happens in other European countries, to look at the way assessment is carried out and to ensure that there are curriculum specifications available appropriate to a wide range of capabilities such as in Wales. **Alignment with the Common European Framework of Reference for languages would greatly contribute to this process.** Teaching resources could be developed for students coming late to the country to learn Irish to a basic level and to grant them a temporary exemption. Gael-Linn is developing resources such as this on a small scale for students in the north of Ireland who do not have the option of learning Irish in their schools. It is worth noting that up to 40% of the marks in the Leaving Certificate Irish exam are awarded to oral Irish.

In very exceptional cases where these arrangements were not suitable, the recommendation of *Comhchoiste na Gaeilge, na Gaeltachta agus Phobal Labhartha na Gaeilge* in 2024 could be followed and the expertise of educational psychologists of the Department of Education and Youth (NEPS) could be called upon. This approach would be in line with the practice followed in other European countries that allow for exemptions from language learning in very exceptional cases. In some instances, it would be possible to grant a partial exemption for the student to have access to certain language skills.

As shown in the projected trends presented above, if urgent action is not taken, the status of Irish as a compulsory school subject will be further reduced. It has become 'common' rather than 'rare' or 'exceptional' to grant exemptions. Spokespersons from the Department of Education and Youth say that it is not their policy to make Irish an optional subject but that is what will result from the current policy if no action is taken. If this were to happen, the Government's target under the Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021<sup>[5]</sup> to have over 20% of recruits to the public service proficient in Irish would certainly not be achieved. The Irish language is growing in popularity in the community (Flynn & Ó Murchadha, 2026) **but there is a problem in post-primary schools that will explode before too long. This disastrous situation can be avoided by applying the recommendations below.**

[5] <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2021/act/49/enacted/en/html>

# MOLTAÍ

- **Deireadh a chur le díolúintí ag leibhéal na bunscoile**

Is féidir curaclam na Gaeilge sa bhunscoil a chur in oiriúint do dhaltaí a bhfuil riachtanais bhreise acu agus an tacaíocht foghlama chuí a chur ar fáil dóibh.

- **Díolúintí sealadacha, páirtdhíolúine, socruithe réasúnta, agus rogha sonraíochta ag leibhéal na hiar-bhunscoile**

Ag leibhéal na hiar-bhunscoile d'fhéadfaí socruithe réasúnta a chur i bhfeidhm bunaithe ar riachtanais na ndaltaí chomh maith leis an gcur chuige teagaisc a leasú. Ba ghá, mar a dhéantar ar fud na hEorpa, breathnú ar chúrsaí measúnaithe agus deimhin a dhéanamh de go mbeadh rogha sonraíochta ann a d'fheilfeadh do réimse leathan cumais ar bhealach a thagann leis an bhFráma Tagartha Comónta Eorpach. Chuideodh díolúine shealadach agus páirtdhíolúine le daltaí a thagann go déanach go dtí an córas, teacht isteach ar an nGaeilge ag leibhéal níos bunúsaí. Ní mór tacaíocht foghlama san iar-bhunscoil a chomhtháthú leis na hábhair eile, faoi mar a dhéantar sa bhunscoil.

- **I gcásanna fioreisceachtúla, ba iad síceolaithe oideachais na Roinne Oideachais agus Óige (NEPS) a chinnfeadh go mbronnfaí díolúine ó staidéar na Gaeilge faoi mhúnla cliniciúil**

Sa chás nach mbeadh na socruithe réasúnta agus an rogha sonraíochta oiriúnach, d'fhéadfaí moladh Chomhchoiste na Gaeilge, na Gaeltachta agus Phobal Labhartha na Gaeilge in 2024 a leanúint agus dul i muintín saineolas síceolaithe oideachais na Roinne Oideachais agus Óige (NEPS). Bheadh an cur chuige seo ag teacht leis an gcleachtas a leantar i dtíortha na hEorpa a cheadaíonn díolúintí fioreisceachtúla ó fhoghlaim teangacha.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Cease exemptions at primary level**

The Irish language curriculum in primary school can be adapted to pupils with additional needs, and they should be provided with appropriate learning support.

- **Temporary exemptions, partial exemption, reasonable arrangements, and choice of specification at post-primary level**

At post-primary level reasonable accommodations could be put in place based on students' needs as well as adapting the teaching approach. It would be necessary, as happens across Europe, to look at student assessment to ensure that there is a choice of specification suitable for a wide range of abilities aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference. A temporary and partial exemption would help students coming late to the system to access Irish at a more basic level. Learning support in post-primary school must be integrated with the other subjects, as is the case in primary school.

- **In very exceptional cases, the Department of Education and Youth educational psychologists (NEPS) would decide if an exemption should be granted using a clinical model**

In the event that the reasonable accommodations and greater specification options were not sufficient, the recommendation of the Comhchoiste na Gaeilge, na Gaeltachta agus Phobal Labhartha na Gaeilge in 2024 could be implemented whereby the expertise of the educational psychologists of the Department of Education and Youth (NEPS) would be drawn upon to determine if a permanent exemption was required. This approach would be in line with the practice followed in European countries that allows for very exceptional exemptions from language learning.

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