



6 May 2022

Dear Principal,

Further to the correspondence of 5 April from my colleague Deirdre Shanley regarding the provision of support to children arriving from Ukraine I would like to provide you with the following further information.

Focus on utilisation of existing capacity:

Utilisation of each school's existing capacity in the most flexible way possible will be key to supporting Ukrainian children who are being enrolled in our schools. There is generally good capacity across the country albeit there may be capacity pressures to be managed in some areas. Contingency arrangements will be put in place to manage these capacity pressures.

It is very important for existing capacity in a town or area to be fully utilised before looking at additional accommodation requirements either via off-site or modular accommodation solutions etc. This will need to be factored in to decision making about enrolment at individual school level. It is far better and more efficient to utilise capacity across all schools in a town or area than for a single school or small number of schools to enrol a large number of Ukrainian children that triggers an application for additional accommodation. This will require good cooperation and collaboration between schools, supported as necessary through the local REALT team. Capacity information on the school system will be made available by the Department's Planning and Building Unit to support and assist the work of the REALT teams. The Department's assessment of any applications for additional accommodation will require it to be satisfied that capacity across all other schools in the town or area is fully utilised. A school should contact its local REALT team if it has insufficient capacity to facilitate Ukrainian children seeking enrolment. The relevant contact details are available at <https://www.etbi.ie/regional-education-and-language-teams-for-ukraine/>

Survey of Post Primary Schools:

The engagement of post-primary schools with our online survey of capacity to accommodate Ukrainian children has been very positive. With almost 95% of schools now having completed the survey, national capacity of circa 3,000 - 4,000 students across each of the year groups has been identified involving an overall total of circa. 18,000-20,000 school places. It is envisaged that this will increase further when all post-primary schools have completed the survey. Post-primary schools which have yet to complete the survey are strongly encouraged to do so as the information provided is of huge assistance in our shared response to this unprecedented situation, particularly in the context of identifying local capacity pressures. If you experience any difficulties

accessing or completing the survey please contact SchoolCapacitySurvey@education.gov.ie or 057 XXXXXXXX (Option 2) for assistance.

Capacity information from the 30 September 2021 enrolment returns on POD that were provided by all primary schools together with Department data on peak enrolment for each school will be used as an indicator of capacity at primary level. While there is good overall capacity at primary level given the downward curve on demographics, it is nevertheless intended to undertake a short on-line capacity survey of special schools and primary schools similar to what was done at post-primary level as part of contingency planning arrangements. It is envisaged that the arrangements for same will be notified to schools before the end of May.

Reminder to ensure POD and PPOD is kept up to date with enrolments:

The POD and PPOD are the systems used to obtain data across all primary and post-primary schools in relation to enrolment of children from Ukraine. Schools are reminded about the importance of ensuring that enrolments are inputted on the POD and PPOD systems on a timely basis and updated, as required, to reflect any subsequent changes or churn in respect of these enrolments. This will help to ensure that the most up to date enrolment position at individual school level is reflected in relation to information and decision-making about utilisation of capacity at local, regional and national level.

Information on residential accommodation for Ukrainian families:

The Department has been advised by the Department of Children, Equality Disability Integration and Youth, which has responsibility for providing emergency accommodation for people arriving from Ukraine, that people are being placed initially in short-term, temporary accommodation on an emergency basis. Schools are advised that due to the emergency situation, families may be required to move location to access longer-term accommodation at short notice.

Hubert Loftus
Head of Planning and Building Unit