

# **Gaelic Medium Education at Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce**

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Is Gaelic Medium Education an option for my child if we don't speak Gaelic ourselves?**

Yes, many learners in Gaelic medium education come from non-Gaelic speaking homes. However, in order to support your child through Gaelic Medium Education it is advisable that parents/carers learn Gaelic alongside their child in order to help and support them with their learning.

At Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce we help support families on their Gaelic language learning journey by hosting a variety of Gaelic classes for adults. We also have a number of eager and willing Gaelic Ambassadors who can help support families trying to learn Gaelic in a supportive way. Our primary classes also run monthly Gaelic classes for parents/carers and host monthly Gaelic cafes to encourage parents/carers to use their Gaelic in a friendly and supportive environment.

### **Does my child have to have attended Gaelic pre-school before going into P1 in Gaelic Medium Education at Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce?**

Although attending Gaelic Pre-school (sgoil-àraich) is not necessary, it is advisable wherever possible.

In Edinburgh there is a 0-3 Gaelic playgroup (Cròileagan Dhùn- Èideann) which runs during term time at different locations across the city, information can be found on their website: <https://www.facebook.com/croileagan/> .

Pre-school in Gaelic Medium is available at Sgoil-àraich Taobh na Pàirce which is the nursery class at Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce: <https://www.taobhnairce.co.uk/> and also at Òganan Dhùn-Èideann who are a private childcare company who run a pre-school provision within our school building: <https://www.oganan.com/dhun-eideann?lang=en>

### **Do Gaelic Medium Learners at Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce follow a bespoke education?**

Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce is a council run school where we follow the same curriculum (Curriculum for Excellence) as all other City of Edinburgh Council run primary schools across the city. The only difference at Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce is that the curriculum is delivered through the medium of Gaelic.

### **Is Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce an independent school?**

No, Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce is not an independent school. Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce is a state school run by the City of Edinburgh Council. We operate in the same way as all other City of Edinburgh Council run primary schools.

### **I have heard that there are smaller class sizes in Gaelic schools, is it the case that there are smaller class sizes at Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce?**

Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce is a very big school with over 400 learners, therefore, we have large class sizes. We run with the same class size capacity as English medium schools. Currently we have a nursery class and 16 primary classes and many of our classes are very large, some of our classes have up to 33 learners in them.

### **How is Gaelic taught at Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce?**

At Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce we follow a total immersion approach to learning the Gaelic language. Staff will speak to learners at all times in Gaelic and all lessons in all subjects across the curriculum are where possible delivered in Gaelic. English reading is introduced in clas 4, however, Gaelic still remains the principal language of the classroom all the way through primary school. The aim is to ensure that learners achieve equal fluency in both Gaelic and English by clas 7.

### **Can I transfer my child who has been learning in English medium education to Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce after P1?**

*Experience has shown us that pupils who have joined Gaelic medium education in Edinburgh later than P1 and without a strong previous Gaelic medium education background, are at risk of not being able comfortably to access the curriculum. This has repercussions for their overall attainment and for their health and well-being. This being the case, we only admit pupils later than P1 if they have previously been educated in a Gaelic medium education setting elsewhere and can start with us with the levels of skills and confidence in learning through Gaelic appropriate to the stage in the school that they would be joining.*

### **When do learners start to learn to read in English at Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce?**

At Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce, we follow a complete immersion approach from sgoil-àraich (Gaelic Nursery) to Clas 3. This means that where possible all learning is delivered through the medium of Gaelic. Learners will start to learn to read in English when they are introduced to English phonics in clas 4.

### **Do all the staff at Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce speak Gaelic?**

Almost all of the staff at Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce speak Gaelic. Many are fluent speakers and others are learning the language. Staff at Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce are supported to learn Gaelic and to develop their Gaelic language skills.

### **Does Gaelic Medium Education hinder children's development?**

Studies have shown that learners who have gone through Gaelic medium education do as well as or better than their peers in all subjects including English.

### **How important is the role of the parents/carers in supporting the language development of their children in Gaelic Medium Education?**

The parent/carer's role is of utmost importance. Parents/carers should endeavor to always create positive attitudes towards Gaelic and to pass these positive attitudes on to their families. Parents/carers can support language learning at home by using Gaelic as much as possible when speaking to their child in order to help improve their Gaelic vocabulary. This can be done by asking questions about their day, playing games which encourage conversation and reading to them in Gaelic.

### **How can I support my child's through Gaelic Medium education when I do not speak Gaelic myself?**

You can support your child by taking an interest in their education and in as many aspects of Gaelic activity as possible i.e. Gaelic television, radio, online materials, out of school activities and social events.

There are also many opportunities for parents/carers to learn Gaelic for themselves. At Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce we host a variety of Gaelic classes for parents and carers and there are also opportunities to attend Gaelic language classes across the city. There are also many Gaelic classes to be found online. Information on Gaelic classes available throughout Scotland can be found on: [www.learnghaelic.net](http://www.learnghaelic.net). Gaelic classes and events happening in Edinburgh are usually advertised on Capital Gaelic's Facebook page: [https://www.facebook.com/CapitalGaelic/?locale=en\\_GB](https://www.facebook.com/CapitalGaelic/?locale=en_GB)

### **How will I help my child with their homework in Gaelic if I am not a Gaelic speaker?**

Audio recordings of our Gaelic reading books can be found on [www.gaelic4parents.com](http://www.gaelic4parents.com). At Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce we issue termly Family Learning Homework mats which are based around the learning that the learners will have covered in class. The activities on the homework mats are chosen to encourage family engagement and on learning and improving Gaelic language skills together as a family.

### **How can parents/carers learn Gaelic themselves?**

Please click on the link to see what classes are available for parents/carers.

<https://taobhnapairce.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Gaelic-Flow-Chart-1.pdf>

### **Is there a Gaelic community in Edinburgh?**

There are many Gaelic speakers living in Edinburgh and there are lots of Gaelic events, social gatherings, meet ups and classes that are held throughout the year. The most up to date information on the Gaelic events happening across the city can be found on Capital Gaelic's facebook page:

[https://www.facebook.com/CapitalGaelic/?locale=en\\_GB](https://www.facebook.com/CapitalGaelic/?locale=en_GB)

### **Why should we bother trying to use Gaelic at home if they are being taught Gaelic at school?**

The home environment has a crucial role to play in every learner's education. Using Gaelic at home and reinforcing the Gaelic that your child is learning at school is invaluable and will help them develop many aspects of their language skills which may not always be part of their formal education experience at school.

### **Will attending Gaelic-medium education at Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce affect my child's fluency in English?**

Learners attending Gaelic medium education at Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce are taught almost entirely in Gaelic. This will enable them to feel more confident with the language and help develop their fluency. English reading is introduced in clas 4 and most learners are able to transfer the skills that they have learnt in one language to the other, this means, that for most learners they tend to progress quickly with English reading once they are introduced to it.

### **I like to read to my child at home. How can I do this in Gaelic if they and I are not fluent in Gaelic?**

Audio recordings of many of the Gaelic resources that we use at Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce can be found on the following website: [www.gaelic4parents.com](http://www.gaelic4parents.com). You can find audio recordings of Gaelic story books here and new titles are added regularly.

### **Can children with additional support needs attend Gaelic Medium education?**

Learners with additional support needs can and do attend Gaelic medium education. Many of our learners are supported by our Support for Learning team in school, other learners are supported by the Additional Support for Learning service at City of Edinburgh Council and some are supported at school by outside agencies such as the Educational Psychologist, SALT, OT, Place2Be, the School Counsellor Service etc.

### **My child will not answer when being spoken to in Gaelic and will only respond in English. How should we deal with this as parents/carers?**

Even in Gaelic speaking homes, some children will persist in only speaking English. This is an issue that needs to be dealt with sensitively as insisting on your child using Gaelic can often strengthen their resistance to use the language. Often gentle persuasion or asking them to repeat in Gaelic is advisable. There will no doubt be a reason for the child's insistence to use only English but they may not be able to communicate to you what that is. Possible causes for this may be: the child asserting their independence, feeling overshadowed by an older sibling/friend, rebellion caused by being corrected for their errors in Gaelic, lack of confidence to use the language outwith the classroom or embarrassment about being spoken to in Gaelic in the presence of non-Gaelic speakers.

## **Information on Gaelic Medium Secondary Education:**

### **Where will my child continue with Gaelic Medium Education once they have left Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce at the end on P7?**

Learners who continue their studies in Gaelic Medium Education will transfer to James Gilliespie's High School. In S1 and S2 at JGHS, learners will be taught through the medium of Gaelic in 10 of their 16 subjects.

### **Does my child have to continue with Gaelic Medium Education at James Gillespie's High School?**

Yes. If you do not wish your child to continue with Gaelic Medium Education, they will transfer to their local catchment secondary provision.

### **Does my child need to study their subjects through the medium of Gaelic at JGHS?**

Gaelic Medium Education pupils at James Gilliespie's High School are required to follow the GME pathway. This means that they study all subjects that are taught through the medium of Gaelic (currently 10 out of 16 subjects) in S1-S2. Subjects not taught through the medium of Gaelic include English and Maths.

Once in S3 and S4, pupils will study the majority of their subjects through the medium of English. Those who wish to continue the study of History or Modern Studies in S3 and S4 will continue to do so through the medium of Gaelic, however, with no provision available through the medium of English.

Gaelic, as a subject, is mandatory for GME pupils until the end of S4.

### **Does my child have to continue with Gaelic Medium Education into Secondary School?**

Yes. If you do not wish your child to continue with Gaelic Medium Education, they will transfer to their local catchment secondary provision.

### **Does my child need to study their subjects through the medium of Gaelic at JGHS?**

Gaelic Medium Education pupils at James Gilliespie's High School are required to follow the GME pathway. This means that they study all subjects that are taught through the medium of Gaelic (currently 10 out of 16 subjects) in S1-S2. Subjects not taught through the medium of Gaelic include English and Maths.

Once in S3 and S4, pupils will study the majority of their subjects through the medium of English. Those who wish to continue the study of History or Modern Studies in S3 and S4 will continue to do so through the medium of Gaelic, however, with no provision available through the medium of English.

Gaelic, as a subject, is mandatory for GME pupils until the end of S4.

## **Information for Fluent Gaelic speaking families:**

### **My child is a fluent Gaelic speaker, why should I choose Gaelic medium Education for them?**

Gaelic medium education reinforces the language of fluent Gaelic speaking learners and encourages them to continue to use their Gaelic in all situations. Following a Gaelic medium education will also enable them to become fully literate in all aspects of the language.

### **My child is a fluent Gaelic speaker and Gaelic is our home language. If they attend Gaelic medium education should I be worried that they will not have a good enough command of English?**

Learners will not be able to avoid a majority language such as English as they are inevitably exposed to English through television, radio, friends, extended family and in the wider community.

**My Child is fluent in Gaelic and their Gaelic has deteriorated since they started attending Gaelic medium education. Why is this and what should we do as parents/carers to support this?**

During the early years many of your child's peers will be learning Gaelic and your child is likely to pick up expressions and habits of speech from these other learners. As the language of the playground is predominantly English it is natural that your child will want to use English with their peers as well. This situation will improve as the other learners become more fluent in Gaelic and provided that you continue to use Gaelic with your child at home this should be a temporary phase. Your child will still be benefiting from a Gaelic medium education and it is likely that their Gaelic skills would have deteriorated more if they were attending an English medium school.