

RAISE Active Schools Programme

Expression of Interest for Primary Schools





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The RAISE Programme

The RAISE Programme is a whole community and place-based approach to tackling educational disadvantage in 18 localities¹ across Northern Ireland, supporting the Department of Education’s vision that “every child and young person is happy, learning and succeeding”.

The TransformED strategy outlines the Minister of Education’s priorities for the transformation of teaching and learning in Northern Ireland. The strategy focuses on the core areas of curriculum, assessment, qualifications, school improvement and tackling educational disadvantage. Complementing existing schools-based programmes, RAISE is the signature approach to tackling educational disadvantage in this regard.

The RAISE Programme’s Strategic Objectives are:

- Raising achievement and addressing educational disadvantage; and
- Raising aspirations through a whole community approach to education.

The RAISE Programme helps to deliver on the mission set by the ‘A Fair Start’ report to ensure all children and young people regardless of background are given the best start in life. It aims to raise educational achievement and aspirations using a combination of Locality Led Projects and Cross-Cutting Initiatives.

A series of Cross-Cutting initiatives have been identified to complement the Locality Led Projects by responding in a strategic way to priorities common to several localities and bringing additional opportunities to communities around key themes.

RAISE Active Schools Programme

The Department of Education is bringing forward a new Cross Cutting Initiative, the **RAISE Active Schools Programme**, to enhance pupil engagement, attendance and wellbeing across RAISE localities.

Developed as a collaborative, multi-sport partnership between the Irish FA Foundation, Ulster Rugby, Ulster GAA and Ulster Hockey, this initiative aligns with the RAISE Programme’s strategic

¹ Belfast has been sub divided into four areas.



objectives of raising achievement and raising aspirations through a whole-community, place-based approach.

The RAISE Active Schools Programme will deliver a curriculum-aligned, multi-sport Physical Education model across 96 primary schools, and is expected to engage 9,600 pupils and provide 96,000 participation opportunities.

Each participating primary school will participate in a structured 10-week block with all sessions delivered in addition to existing Physical Education provision.

The RAISE Active Schools Programme places a strong emphasis on building capacity within schools and ensuring sustainability beyond the life of the initiative. A framework aligned to the Northern Ireland Curriculum underpins delivery, focusing on movement skills, teamwork, creativity and leadership. The programme embeds teacher professional learning through weekly “micro-CPD,” co-delivery opportunities and resource packs, supporting long-term improvements in Physical Education provision and strengthening learning behaviours aligned to improved educational outcomes.

Participating schools will receive:

- A structured multi-sport Physical Education programme delivered by qualified coaches from two different sports.
- Consistent weekly delivery across the Programme block.
- Opportunities for staff to take part in weekly “micro-CPD,” co-delivery and observation.
- A suite of teacher resource materials to support sustainable Physical Education delivery.
- Participation in high-profile multi-sport festivals

School Commitments

Schools participating in the RAISE Active Schools Programme will be expected to commit to the following:

- Active teacher commitment to programme delivery, including attendance at all facilitated sessions, proactive participation in co-delivery where appropriate, and full engagement with weekly “micro-CPD” activities. These actions are required to support high-quality implementation and to build teacher capability within the school.
- Timetabled access to classes to enable consistent programme delivery across the agreed block.
- Nomination of a school lead to act as the main point of contact for programme delivery and communication.
- Engagement with monitoring and evaluation, including completion of agreed feedback, surveys or data collection required to support programme reporting and learning.



Participation in the Programme indicates agreement with these expectations and a commitment to supporting effective delivery and impact.

The Department of Education is inviting Expressions of Interest from all primary schools across Northern Ireland to participate in the RAISE Active Schools Programme.

Delivery Model

The RAISE Active Schools Programme is delivered by the Irish FA Foundation, Ulster GAA, Ulster Rugby and Ulster Hockey through a collaborative, whole-school model.

Participation is free of charge to schools and the spaces are limited.

Each primary school receives:

- 10-week programme block
- Delivery to approximately 4 classes per day
- A structured multi-sport Physical Education programme delivered by qualified coaches from two different sports.

All delivery is in addition to existing Physical Education provision.

Delivery Timelines

The RAISE Active Schools Programme will be delivered across three blocks during the 2026/27 academic year:

- **Block 1:** September – December 2026
- **Block 2:** January – March 2027
- **Block 3:** April – June 2027

Each school will be allocated to one delivery block. Allocation will be managed by the Programme delivery team and will take account of:

- geographical location;
- school timetable readiness;
- coaching team availability; and
- the need to distribute delivery evenly across the academic year.

Where possible, a school's preferred delivery window, as indicated through the Expression of Interest process, will be considered, although this cannot be guaranteed.

A small number of multi-sport celebration festivals will take place in June 2027, open to participating schools.



Eligibility Criteria

All schools (excluding Preparatory and Independent schools) across Northern Ireland can apply, including those not currently serving RAISE localities.

If the project is oversubscribed, schools in or serving RAISE localities will be prioritised.

Submitting an Expression of Interest

All schools must complete an online Expression of Interest form available at the link below:

[Register Here](#)

All forms must be submitted by **12 noon on Friday 8 May 2026**. Late applications will not be accepted.

Support and Queries

For queries regarding the RAISE Active Schools Programme please contact francis.brennan@irishfa.com

For queries regarding the wider RAISE Programme please contact the RAISE Team on raise@education-ni.gov.uk

