Sgoil Araich

Sgoil Shiaboist

(GME: Total Immersion)



Gàidhlig Policy: Total Immersion

This policy provides advice and guidance on best practice to support practitioners in planning and delivering **Total Immersion** in Gaelic Medium Education within the Sgoil Araich setting. (The Total Immersion phase precedes the Immersion phase).

The policy is closely linked to, and follows, national advice (“National Advice on Gaelic Education” updated March 2022). All staff must be familiar with this national advice <https://education.gov.scot/media/haoejcof/advice-on-gaelic-education-march-2022.pdf>

*Gaelic Medium Education provides children with the opportunities and benefits of bilingualism. For some children, acquiring fluency in Gaelic begins in the home with children benefitting from hearing and using Gaelic as part of their family life and upbringing. For other children, they are dependent on learning situations being created for them to develop their fluency.* Children will learn the language in our setting but it is also important to seek opportunities outwith the setting.

Children need to experience high quality **total immersion** until they have a secure foundation in the language and a level of fluency that will enable them to build on the progress being made in Gaelic.

During total immersion, there is a clear emphasis on developing fluency in Gaelic. Initially, learning will have a strong focus on listening and talking in Gaelic through a play-based curriculum. Adults will use and model high quality Gaelic **to each other and to the children,** both within play and learning and beyond. Practitiones will model high quality Gaelic to children and play alongside the children as an effective approach to learning.

In the Sgoil Araich practitioners have many roles: they nurture and care, they model Gaelic, they play, they act and they use prompts to support understanding. Practitioners are important role models.

Practitioners should plan to use rhymes and sing songs to support language development; practitioners should read stories to, and with, children – using a wide range of texts, pictures , role-play etc. Practitioners should use snack times/lunchtimes to support language development. Reading stories aloud, singing songs, language games and the use of rhymes must be planned for in the total immersion setting.

**Play:** regular changes to play contexts (indoors and outdoors) are important to language development; practitioners interact with children during play and must know when to “step in “ and “step out”. Practitioners monitor children’s play and use the information to plan next steps in learning experiences. Practitioners, when interacting with children during play, will provide commentaries in as much Gaelic as possible.

Practitioners should model Gaelic to children and repeat in Gaelic what children may have said in their mother tongue. This supports Gaelic language acquisition. Practitioners should avoid translating from Gaelic to English.

The Sgoil Araich must have lots of opportunities to display written text – the environment within the setting must be literacy and text rich (this should not be bilingual text).

**While our Sgoil Araich has a Total Immersion approach, it is important to note (as per Advice on Gaelic Education, page 8: paragraph 4.5) that the exceptions to the total use of Gaelic includes comforting a child who is distressed , for an emergency situation, or for explaining issues connected to health, safety and wellbeing.**

**Parental engagement:** practitioners work closely alongside parents/carers. Practitioners meet and greet parents on a daily basis. Practitioners record any significant information, achievements etc shared by parents in children’s Care Plans or other available formats. Staff encourage and celebrate children’s achievements in the setting and at home.

Parents are actively encouraged to attend planned Stay and Play sessions, Open Sessions, Parents Evenings, Coffee Afternoons etc. Parents are asked for their views on the setting annually. Information is displayed in the drop-off/pick-up foyer for parents to read/access.

Policy Lead: Mrs S Gunn

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