

PEACEPLUS ASPIRE (Advancing Shared Partnerships through Inclusive Relationships in Education)

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General Information

What is PEACEPLUS ASPIRE?

The PEACEPLUS ASPIRE (Advancing Shared Partnerships through Inclusive Relationships in Education) Project is a multi-year, cross-border & cross-sectoral Shared Education initiative. The project is supported by PEACEPLUS, a programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).

PEACEPLUS ASPIRE aims to foster direct and sustained interaction among children and young people from diverse cultural, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds across schools in Northern Ireland, the border counties of Ireland, and beyond. Through a comprehensive approach encompassing educational, societal, and economic facets, the project utilises reconciliation and peace-building activities to create lasting benefits.

PEACEPLUS ASPIRE will provide successful schools with the funding and resources needed to implement their shared education projects.

What does PEACEPLUS ASPIRE aim to achieve?

PEACEPLUS ASPIRE aims to:

- Reduce educational disadvantage through sharing
- Progress shared practice to build peaceful communities
- Broaden horizons for participants

A commitment to Peace and Reconciliation and Community Engagement: Peace and Reconciliation is at the forefront of PEACEPLUS ASPIRE.

PEACEPLUS ASPIRE seeks to foster collaboration and respect for difference in all aspects of the project and project partners and beneficiaries are expected to demonstrate how PEACEPLUS ASPIRE is furthering and strengthening peace and reconciliation in their school and community. Peace and reconciliation should be the main focus of teaching and learning, community engagement and partnership working.

Additionally, PEACEPLUS ASPIRE seeks to build capacity of pupils, educators and school systems in the following areas:

1. Digital Skills & Technology
2. Community Relations, Equality & Diversity
3. Sensitive & Controversial Issues
4. Attitudes & Dispositions
5. Thinking Skills & Personal Capabilities
6. Catering for Special Educational Needs

A central and fundamental principle of shared education is that it promotes and contributes to community cohesion, both in the school community and the wider community. Shared education aims to build bridges between communities, creating the potential for future joint working, sharing, and collaborating. It is hoped that the PEACEPLUS ASPIRE project will contribute to the development of more integrative, cohesive and sustainable communities in NI, the border counties, and beyond. PEACEPLUS ASPIRE schools are expected to demonstrate in their action plan and in project monitoring how they are engaging with their local communities in order to promote peace and reconciliation.

Is my school eligible to take part?

PEACEPLUS ASPIRE is open to primary and secondary schools in Northern Ireland and the border counties (Louth, Monaghan, Sligo, Leitrim, Donegal, and Cavan).

Schools must identify between one and three other schools to work in partnership with for the school year, **delivering 30 hours of shared education to funded pupils.**

These partnerships must be schools that are geographically close together, and which represent a diverse student population.

The diversity of the school population must be reflected in the pupils who participate in PEACEPLUS ASPIRE.

Schools who were part of PEACEPLUS ASPIRE 2024/25 and/or CASE are eligible to apply.

Schools must demonstrate a commitment to peace and reconciliation and community engagement.

Schools must demonstrate the capacity to monitor and report on project progress, including financial reporting.



What can I expect? Key Features of PEACEPLUS ASPIRE

Key Features of PEACEPLUS ASPIRE

Funding:	Schools will receive €150 per funded pupil, up to a maximum of 80 pupils per school.
Partnership working for peace and reconciliation:	Schools will work in partnership to develop and deliver 30 hours of shared education that integrates curriculum, school policy and school improvement. This is implemented with the aim of promoting peace and reconciliation, inclusion, and community engagement. Partner schools will work together to maximise resources, share expertise and build sustainable relationships.
Ongoing support:	Participating schools will benefit from ongoing support from the PEACEPLUS ASPIRE Team from application to final reporting.
Educator Professional Learning:	PEACEPLUS ASPIRE will provide educators with professional learning opportunities in participating schools. This will be in the areas of digital innovation, leadership for shared education, and responding to sensitive and relevant issues.

What is the project timeline?

PEACEPLUS ASPIRE PROJECT TIMELINE



Contractual Obligations

What is the Letter of Offer?

The Letter of Offer outlines the contractual agreement between Léargas and schools and must be signed by all parties prior to release of funds. Each school will receive a Letter of Offer after their partnership's action plan and budget is approved. Schools should familiarise themselves with the content of the Letter of Offer and reach out to Léargas if they have any questions.

While this FAQ is intended to support schools in understanding the process, the Letter of Offer is the definitive reference document.

How do I sign the Letter of Offer?

Setting up a TrustPro account can take time, so we recommend doing this in advance. All account setup and support are provided directly by TrustPro.

The Letter of Offer must be signed digitally by the Legal Representative (principal) and returned to Léargas for co-signing by the Executive Director. In Ireland, [TrustPro](#) has been identified as an approved qualified electronic signature provider. The Legal Representative of the school will need to create a TrustPro account to create a Qualified Electronic Signature (QES) which is a digital signature legally equivalent to a handwritten signature and is recognised across the EU. Authenticating your account on TrustPro can take time, it is advisable that the legal rep sets this up in advance of receiving the Letter of Offer. The Letter of Offer is sent by email containing a link to AdobeSign.

Please click this [link](#) for information on setting up your TrustPro account.

Letter of Offer Checklist ✓

- Partnership Action Plan Approved
- Budget Approved
- TrustPro Account Authenticated (external provider)
- Letter of Offer sent by email containing a link to AdobeSign
- Letter of Offer Signed Digitally by the Legal Representative (principal)
- Returned to Léargas for Co-Signing by the Executive Director
- First 50% Payment Released

What is the PEACEPLUS ASPIRE Action Plan?

All partnerships submit a joint action plan each year, outlining their objectives and key actions for shared education, including how they will deliver 30 hours of shared education within their partnership. All partnerships must submit a PEACEPLUS ASPIRE action plan. PEACEPLUS ASPIRE Development Officers will support the development, implementation

and monitoring of your partnership's action plan. **Please see the separate documents and guidance on action planning for detailed information on this.**

How can partnerships deliver 30 hours of shared education?

Partnerships must offer and provide funded pupils with 30 hours of shared education during the academic year. This can be delivered through a mix of teacher-led and student-led sessions, externally facilitated sessions, community engagement events, and through digital delivery. There must be sustained contact between pupils in the partnership, and the sessions must have a teaching and learning/curricular focus with the overall emphasis on peace and reconciliation.

How many hours of shared education can be delivered digitally?

Partnerships are encouraged to use digital technology to support curriculum innovation, enhance partnership working and engage the local community.

Partnerships can deliver 6 hours of the 30 required hours through digital platforms.



What if a funded pupil does not receive 30 hours of shared education?

The second 50% of funding is allocated solely on the basis that each funded pupil participated in 30 hours of shared education. It is up to schools to ensure this and to factor issues such as illness or absence into their shared education planning. Where a funded pupil does not receive 30 hours of shared education, the second funding instalment may be reduced by the total unit cost for that pupil, except where the school can demonstrate that 30 hours of shared education was offered to this pupil, but due to exceptional circumstances, they were unable to participate.

In such cases, a pupil will be regarded as having completed the PEACEPLUS ASPIRE project if they have participated in 24 hours of shared education.

PEACEPLUS ASPIRE Funding and Substitution Cover

How much funding can schools apply for?

Each school taking part in PEACEPLUS ASPIRE will receive €150 or £126 per funded pupil up to a maximum of 80 pupils per school.

What can this funding be spent on?

7 days substitution cover is paid for through the Department of Education and Youth and schools do not need to pay for this through their grant funding.

These 7 days allocation can be used for planning, teaching, and learning and the overall implementation of PEACEPLUS ASPIRE.

For all schools, funding can be allocated to the following budgets:

- Transport
- Resources (50%) + Materials
- Hire of facilities
- External facilitation

The funding cannot be used to purchase additional cover days unless in exceptional circumstances and with the agreement of the PEACEPLUS ASPIRE Team.

Are there any restrictions on what PEACEPLUS ASPIRE funding can be used for?

Funding can only be used to advance shared education within the partnership.

Capital assets cannot be purchased with PEACEPLUS ASPIRE funding.

The PEACEPLUS ASPIRE project is not intended to be a resource-driven project to the detriment of partnership working and community engagement. **A maximum of 50% of the grant funding can be used to purchase resources.**

Only spend evidenced after the Letter of Offer is signed can be covered by the PEACEPLUS ASPIRE funding.

How do I know my planned spending is approved?

At the time that your partnership submits their Action Plan, you will also submit an indicative budget, outlining how your partnership intends to allocate their grant. This will be clarified and confirmed by your Development Officer around the time you sign the Letter of Offer.

Can partnerships reallocate their budget?

Yes, with the agreement of their Development Officer and in line with the funding rules.

Do partnerships need to spend all the funding by a particular date?

Partnerships must have spent the grant by the end of the academic year. Funding cannot be rolled over to the following year.

How is the funding received by schools?

Each school in the partnership will receive their allocation of funds into their school's bank account. Schools will receive 50% of the funding after all relevant parties have signed the Letter of Offer and the second 50% of the funding upon completion of a final report, at the end of academic year. The second payment is made based on all funded pupils receiving 30 hours of shared education. **Schools should consider carefully the risks associated with this and agree with their Boards of Management that this is feasible for their school.**

Please note that while schools receive individual funding, they will manage and report on their overall budget as a partnership.

Can I make a change to the number of pupils I have applied for funding for?

It may be possible to do this up to the date that the Letter of Offer is signed. After this, no changes can be made to the funding agreement. Please contact us urgently if you need to make a change to this. If more pupils participate in PEACEPLUS ASPIRE than the number of pupils funded, partnerships can report on this number (clearly delineating between funded and non-funded pupils), but no additional funding is available after the Letter of Offer is signed.

How do I apply for sub-cover?

Schools must use the Department of Education and Youth's Online Claims System (OLCS) to claim their substitution cover costs. On OLCS you need to choose Leave under Other Agencies: LOA and then EU Peace Programmes in the drop-down menus. Schools can claim up to a maximum of 7 days through OLCS.

Is additional funding and/or sub-cover available for Educator Professional Learning?

Further details of the process for Educator Professional Learning will be available shortly.

Schools must use the Department of Education and Youth's Online Claims System (OLCS) to claim their substitution cover costs.



Schools and partnerships should keep evidence of receipts, quotes and procurement associated with PEACEPLUS ASPIRE spending for up to 5 years.

What financial records do schools need to keep?

Schools and partnerships should keep evidence of receipts, quotes and procurement associated with PEACEPLUS ASPIRE spending for up to 5 years. It is the responsibility of each school to ensure that all their financial records and accounts are accurate, complete, and up to date in case of an audit.

Partnerships should track their spending using the budget tracker provided by Léargas and record their spending throughout the project. The project is governed by the **National Public Procurement Framework Guidelines**.

PEACEPLUS ASPIRE Monitoring and Support

What are the ways that partnerships monitor their projects?

Partnerships will outline in their PEACEPLUS ASPIRE application and Action Plan how they intend to monitor and evaluate their project and will be supported by the PEACEPLUS ASPIRE Team to monitor their project in the following ways:

- Dedicated point of contact for questions and guidance
- Action planning and budget planning documents (required)
- Project Management sessions facilitated by Léargas (required)
- Monitoring and support visits from Development Officers (required)
- Provision of templates to track project funds and pupil attendance at shared education sessions (required)

- Pre and post project survey evaluations for the school community (optional)
- Templates for planning PEACEPLUS ASPIRE shared sessions (optional)

Please note these supports are separate from the Educator Professional Learning opportunities that will be offered through the PEACEPLUS ASPIRE project.

Where can I find the monitoring templates?

These can be found by clicking this [link](#).

You will find:

- Shared education session plan template
- Pupil tracker excel
- Budget tracker excel

Resources

- Shared education session plan
- Budget Tracker
- Pupil Hour Tracker
- PEACEPLUS ASPIRE logos

What happens during a Monitoring and Support visit?

As part of your shared education project, there will be two monitoring visits throughout the year from a PEACEPLUS ASPIRE Development Officer. These visits are designed to support your progress and will include a review of your action plan, an opportunity to share updates, and a chance to ask any questions. You will receive at least one week's notice ahead of each visit, along with further details to help you prepare. The focus of these visits is on listening to your experiences and ensuring the project is moving forward effectively.

What is the final report?

At the end of the PEACEPLUS ASPIRE academic year, each partnership will submit documentation that outlines their final data on pupil and staff engagement and how far they achieved their shared education objectives for that year. This documentation is required in order for partnerships to receive their second grant instalment. It typically includes:

- Pupil Tracker (one per each school setting)
- Budget Tracker (one for the whole partnership)
- SEUPB Engagement Declaration
- Final Monitoring and Evaluation form

Please note that these requirements may be subject to change. If SEUPB requests any additional documentation, Léargas will inform partnerships as soon as possible.

At the final report stage, partnerships may include the total number of pupils who took part in PEACEPLUS ASPIRE. However, in cases where this number is greater than the number of pupils originally funded by the programme, this must be clearly indicated. No additional funding is available for pupil participation beyond what was agreed in the Letter of Offer.

In some cases – for example the Engagement Declaration – partnerships will only be asked to report the number of funded pupils to satisfy funder reporting and evaluation.



No additional funding is available for pupil participation beyond what was agreed in the Letter of Offer.

What is the role of the Development Officer?

Each partnership will be assigned a dedicated PEACEPLUS ASPIRE Development Officer.

This person will be your primary point of contact throughout the project, providing guidance and support to ensure high-quality implementation and effective budget management.

You can reach your Development Officer at any time by phone or email for support with any aspect of your project.

Assigned Development Officers		
Development Officer: Urszula Gamarra	Development Officer: Caroline McCarron	Development Officer: Aoife Kelly Gibson
Partnership Number	Partnership Number	Partnership Number
1	30	4
25	32	9
28	45	12
42	87	35
95	90	39
104	117	58
108	121	91
120	130	119
124	131	136
126	132	138
129	139	144
133	140	147
137	145	149
141	146	150
142	219	151
148	225	152
201	228	216

Contact us

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