

# Jargon Buster: Northern Ireland's Education System

The following table lists some of the terms that might be relevant to aspects of your child's education. It includes definitions and links to pages where you can find out more.

<a href="#"><u>Area Learning Community (ALC)</u></a>	Every post-primary school in Northern Ireland is now a member of an ALC. This is a forum that enables schools, further education colleges and training providers to collaborate to provide their pupils with access to the <a href="#"><u>Entitlement Framework</u></a> and promotes a shared responsibility for its delivery. There are currently 28 ALCs across Northern Ireland.
<a href="#"><u>AS and A Levels</u></a>	Advanced Subsidiary (AS) and Advanced (A) level qualifications normally take two years to complete full-time in school or at an FE college, although they're also available to study part-time.
<a href="#"><u>Board of Governors (BoG)</u></a>	Every school is managed by a Board of Governors. They work with the school principal to meet the educational needs of the school pupils in a secure and safe environment. Parents, teachers and people over 18 years old can apply to be a school governor.
<a href="#"><u>C2k</u></a>	The C2k project supports the use of ICT in grant-aided schools in Northern Ireland. The Education Authority manages C2k on behalf of the Department of Education.
<a href="#"><u>Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP)</u></a>	CYPSP is a multi-agency partnership that works across statutory, voluntary and community sectors. It aims to improve the wellbeing and the realisation of rights of children in Northern Ireland.
<a href="#"><u>Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (CnaG)</u></a>	CnaG is the representative body for Irish-medium education. It was set up in 2000 by the Department of Education to promote, facilitate and encourage Irish-medium education. CnaG aims to make Irish-medium education available to parents who would like their children to be educated in Irish.
<a href="#"><u>Controlled School</u></a>	Controlled schools (nursery, primary, special, secondary and grammar) are under the management of the schools' Boards of Governors, and the employing authority is the Education Authority. Almost half of Northern Ireland's schools are controlled schools.
<a href="#"><u>Controlled Schools' Support Council (CSSC)</u></a>	CSSC was created in September 2016. It works on behalf of schools and the wider controlled education sector to enhance the quality of education provision. It focuses on advocacy (for individual schools and the controlled sector), developing and maintaining the ethos of the controlled sector, supporting the appointment and training of governors, raising standards, and area planning to look at development plans for changes to school provision. The Council works in partnership with the Education Authority and the Department of Education, as well as other sectoral bodies and schools.
<a href="#"><u>Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS)</u></a>	CCMS supports the management of the Catholic Maintained sector of schools. CCMS represents teachers, trustees, schools and governors on issues such as raising and maintaining standards, the school estate and teacher employment.

# Jargon Buster: Northern Ireland's Education System

<p><b><u>Department of Education (DE)</u></b></p>	<p>Northern Ireland's Department of Education (DE) is the government department that aims to promote the education of the people of Northern Ireland and to ensure the effective implementation of education policy.</p> <p>Its responsibilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• providing information to support the delivery of the curriculum in schools;</li> <li>• raising standards and school improvement;</li> <li>• providing help and advice for pupils and parents on a range of educational and personal issues;</li> <li>• teachers' pay and conditions;</li> <li>• information for non-teaching staff in relation to pay-related issues and terms and conditions; and</li> <li>• schools and infrastructure, support and development, statistics and research, and good relations and social change.</li> </ul> <p>See also the Education Authority's <a href="#">Useful Links for Parents</a>.</p>
<p><b><u>The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI)</u></b></p>	<p>The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) is part of the Department of Education (DE), providing independent inspection services and policy advice for DE and other government departments.</p>
<p><b><u>Education Authority (EA or EANI)</u></b></p>	<p>The Education Authority is responsible for ensuring that efficient and effective primary and secondary education services are available to meet the needs of children and young people, and support for the provision of efficient and effective youth services. It is also the employing authority for controlled schools.</p>
<p><b><u>Entitlement Framework</u></b></p>	<p>The Entitlement Framework is an education policy that aims to provide young people with access to a broad and balanced curriculum regardless of where they live or which school they attend. It guarantees young people access to a minimum number of courses at Key Stage 4 and post-16, either at school or at a further education college. The courses available must be relevant and have clear progression pathways.</p> <p>See also the Department of Education leaflet <a href="#">Your Child's Choice</a>.</p>
<p><b><u>Extended Schools Programme</u></b></p>	<p>The Department of Education's extended schools programme aims to improve levels of educational achievement for disadvantaged children and young people. Extended schools activities are designed to support learning, raise school standards and promote healthy lifestyles.</p>
<p><b><u>Further Education (FE) Colleges</u></b></p>	<p>FE colleges provide full-time and part-time further and higher education courses.</p>
<p><b><u>General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE)</u></b></p>	<p>The GCSE is the main qualification taken by 14 to 16 year olds, but GCSEs are available to learners of any age. You can take GCSEs in a wide range of academic and applied (or work-related) subjects at school or in your local further education (FE) college.</p> <p>CCEA is responsible for regulating qualifications in Northern Ireland.</p>

# Jargon Buster: Northern Ireland's Education System

<p><u>The General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI)</u></p>	<p>The GTCNI is the statutory, independent body for the teaching profession. It is dedicated to enhancing the status of teaching and promoting the highest standards of professional conduct and practice.</p>												
<p><u>Gifted and Talented (G&amp;T)</u></p>	<p>Gifted and Talented children come under provision arrangements for special educational needs (SEN).</p> <p>See also the NI Direct information on <a href="#">Supporting Gifted and Talented Children</a>.</p>												
<p><u>Higher Education Institution (HEI)</u></p>	<p>Higher education institutions in Northern Ireland consist of three universities and two university colleges.</p>												
<p><u>Independent School</u></p>	<p>An independent school is independent in its finances and governance; it does not usually depend on national or local government, or rely on taxpayer contributions, to finance its operations. Instead, it is funded by a combination of tuition charges, donations, and in some cases the investment yield of an endowment. It is typically governed by a board of governors that is elected independently of government.</p>												
<p><u>Integrated School</u></p>	<p>Integrated schools bring together in one school children and staff from Catholic and Protestant traditions, as well as those of other faiths or none. Some integrated schools are grant maintained and some controlled. There are several Charitable Trusts for Integrated Education across Northern Ireland which have helped to establish integrated schools in their area of operation.</p>												
<p><u>Irish-Medium School</u></p>	<p>Irish-medium education is education provided in an Irish-speaking school. The Department of Education has a duty to encourage and facilitate the development of Irish-medium education. Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta (CnaG) was established by DE in 2000 to promote Irish-medium education.</p>												
<p><u>Key Stages</u></p>	<p>The 12 years of compulsory education are divided into five key stages. Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are primary education, and Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 are post-primary education.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="379 1563 750 1792"> <thead> <tr> <th>Key Stage</th> <th>School Years</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Foundation</td> <td>1–2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Key Stage 1</td> <td>3–4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Key Stage 2</td> <td>5–7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Key Stage 3</td> <td>8–10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Key Stage 4</td> <td>11–12</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>See also the information about the <a href="#">school curriculum</a> on NI Direct.</p>	Key Stage	School Years	Foundation	1–2	Key Stage 1	3–4	Key Stage 2	5–7	Key Stage 3	8–10	Key Stage 4	11–12
Key Stage	School Years												
Foundation	1–2												
Key Stage 1	3–4												
Key Stage 2	5–7												
Key Stage 3	8–10												
Key Stage 4	11–12												
<p><u>Maintained School</u></p>	<p>Maintained schools (nursery, primary, special and secondary) are under the management of the school's Board of Governors, and the employing authority is the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS).</p>												

# Jargon Buster: Northern Ireland's Education System

<p><b><u>The Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY)</u></b></p>	<p>NICCY's role is to safeguard and promote the rights and best interests of children and young people.</p> <p>The Commissioner uses the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (sometimes called the UNCRC) to guide her work and the work of her staff. The UNCRC is a list of 42 basic rights which every child and young person in Northern Ireland should have.</p>
<p><b><u>The Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE)</u></b></p>	<p>NICIE was formed as a charitable organisation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• co-ordinate efforts to develop integrated education; and</li> <li>• support parent groups through the process of opening new schools.</li> </ul> <p>It also co-ordinates the efforts of the Council, Trusts and Schools through its Board of Directors.</p>
<p><b><u>Pre-School Education</u></b></p>	<p>Pre-school education is available to every child in Northern Ireland but not compulsory. If you want your child to have pre-school education, you need to apply for a place.</p>
<p><b><u>Primary School</u></b></p>	<p>In Northern Ireland pupils normally attend primary school for seven years, from age 4 to age 11, then move on to a post-primary school.</p>
<p><b><u>Special School</u></b></p>	<p>Special schools, or special needs schools, are schools for children of all ages with special educational needs due to severe learning difficulties, physical disabilities or behavioural problems. Special schools may be specifically designed, staffed and resourced to provide appropriate special education for children with additional needs.</p>
<p><b><u>Sure Start</u></b></p>	<p>Sure Start is a Department of Education programme targeted at parents and children under the age of four living in the most disadvantaged areas. The programme can help a parent from pregnancy until their child starts school. With Sure Start's ongoing support, a child can do well at school and flourish at home.</p>
<p><b><u>Voluntary Grammar (VG) School</u></b></p>	<p>A voluntary grammar school is a post-primary school managed by a Board of Governors. This is made up of people appointed in line with each school's scheme of management (usually trustees or foundation governors), along with representatives of parents and teachers and, in most cases, members appointed by the Department of Education.</p> <p>The Board of Governors of a VG school is the employing authority responsible for the employment of all staff (teaching and non-teaching) in the school.</p>