

Better Internet for Kids (BIK) Policy monitor country profile 2025: IRELAND

The [BIK Policy monitor country profiles](#) summarise findings about the implementation of the BIK+ strategy's three pillars (protection, empowerment, participation) across each of the EU's Member States as well as Iceland and Norway. Download the full [BIK Policy monitor report 2025](#) from the [BIK Policy monitor](#) on the new [BIK Knowledge hub](#) and access the [Irish country profile online](#) on the BIK Knowledge hub.

Introduction

On 21 October 2025, [Coimisiún na Meán](#) published and adopted its first [Online Safety Code](#), following extensive public and stakeholder consultation and engagement with its recently established Youth Advisory Committee. The code applies binding obligations to designated video-sharing platform services. It gives practical effect to the requirements set out in Article 28b of Directive 2018/1808/EU (revised Audiovisual Media Services Directive). In particular, the code requires designated services to operate effective complaint-handling mechanisms, age-verification systems, parental control features, and content rating systems.

BIK policies

Policy frameworks

Policy frameworks describe the overarching approach for a better internet, and establish the underlying goals, principles and guidelines that shape individual policies within this area.

- This topic is being **comprehensively addressed** with children's online protection, digital empowerment and digital participation incorporated into national/regional laws, regulations and policies.
- There are **separate, dedicated policies** that address children and the digital environment (protection, empowerment, and participation).
- **The BIK+ strategy is an important influence on policy development on** children and the digital environment which informs and guides national policies even if they do not directly refer to BIK+.
- **National policies and policy documents explicitly recognise children's rights in** the digital environment.

	High	Medium	Low	Not present
Coverage of BIK+ issues in national policies	X			
Integration of policy provision		X		
Influence of the BIK+ strategy		X		
Recognition of children's rights	X			

Table 1: Topic summary - policy frameworks

Key national policy frameworks are:

- Ireland comprehensively addresses this topic through a range of policies and strategies which include children's online safety and well-being in the digital environment as priorities. A whole of Government approach to digital regulation and children's online safety is contained within the National Digital Strategy - [Harnessing Digital: The Digital Ireland Framework](#).
- The [Online Safety and Media Regulation \(OSMR\) Act](#) (2022) has established [Coimisiún na Meán](#) as an independent regulator for broadcasting, video on-demand and online safety with a role in supporting media development. The Act created the position of Online Safety Commissioner and enabled the completion of transposition of the EU's revised Audiovisual Media Services

Directive (AVMSD), including through the development and adoption of An Coimisiún's first [Online Safety Code](#).

- [Young Ireland: the National Policy Framework for Children & Young People 2023-2028](#) identifies the digital environment as a priority area among current issues impacting children and young people. It also highlights digital mental health and well-being.

Regarding the three BIK Pillars, the following are especially relevant:

- Pillar 1: The [Online Safety and Media Regulation Act 2022](#) establishes [Coimisiún na Meán](#) as an independent regulator for broadcasting, video-on-demand and online safety.
- Pillar 2: [Digital Strategy for Schools to 2027](#) aims to support the school system further and ensure that all learners can gain the knowledge and skills they need to navigate an ever-evolving digital world successfully.
- Pillar 3: The [National Framework for Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making](#) supports departments, agencies, and organisations in improving their participation practices with children and young people.

Policy design

Policy design asks whether evidence and research support BIK-related policies and whether systems are in place for monitoring and evaluating those policies.

- **Surveys of children's digital activities are undertaken**, but only irregularly.
- **Surveys of children's experiences** of risks, harms and digital well-being **are undertaken on an ad-hoc and irregular basis**.
- **Systems are in place at the government level** to gather information on children and the digital environment (e.g., dedicated research units, think tanks or commissions).
- **Existing national research funding is available for research** on children and the digital environment, but this is **not explicitly specified**.

- **Policies are monitored and evaluated, but not systematically.** It depends on the needs at a particular time or when policies are being considered.

	High	Medium	Low	Not present
Regular data collection			X	
Data on risks, harms and digital well-being			X	
Information systems	X			
National research fund		X		
Monitoring and evaluation		X		

Table 2: Topic summary - policy design

Recent national research studies include:

- The last comprehensive survey of children's digital uses and experiences was the [Report of a National Survey of Children, their Parents and Adults regarding Online Safety](#) (2021). This was modelled on the EU Kids Online pan-European series of studies and followed on from its last report in 2020. Coimisiún na Meán will coordinate the Irish EU Kids Online ("EUKO") survey and report going forward.
- A range of systems are in place at government level to inform policy development. These include research functions within government departments and the relevant regulatory agencies including [Coimisiún na Meán](#) and the [Irish Data Protection Commission](#). As the newly established regulator with responsibility for online safety, Coimisiún na Meán incorporates a research function through which it will systematically gather evidence to support its work.
- National research funding for which this topic could be eligible for funding include [Taighde Éireann](#) (Research Ireland). A wide range of research projects are funded through this agency, including those related to child online safety. A notable example is the [GroSafe](#) project, a partnership between the [Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children \(ISPCC\)](#) and [Technological](#)

University (TU) Dublin, aimed at developing technology solutions to combat online child grooming.

Policy governance

Policy governance examines how policies are coordinated at the governmental level, whether other implementation bodies are involved in their delivery, and whether structured mechanisms are available to guide their implementation.

- There is **one central body** (e.g., a central ministry office, public agency, or regulatory authority) formally mandated to lead and develop policies, guidelines, and programmes related to children and the digital environment.
- **A clearly defined coordination function is in place**, involving all relevant stakeholders and encompassing the cross-cutting policy issues relating to children and the digital environment.
- There is a **defined national action plan on children and the digital environment** with accountabilities such as defined timelines, assigned responsibilities or key performance indicators (KPIs).

	High	Medium	Low	Not present
Lead ministry for policy development	X			
National coordination body	X			
National action plan or strategy	X			

Table 3: Topic summary - policy governance

- There is a well-structured system of governance in place regarding policies on children and the digital environment. The parent department at the governmental level for implementation of the OSMR Act is the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, which oversees national policy development in this area, including broadcasting and media policy more generally. Responsibility for the implementation of the Digital Services

Act lies with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. At the same time, the Department of Justice oversees the implementation of legislation dealing with sexual offences against children and related EU policies on child online protection.

- **Coimisiún na Meán** is the primary agency responsible for enforcing a new regulatory framework for online safety and regulating broadcast media and video-on-demand services.
- The **Irish Safer Internet Centre** Advisory Group also fosters a supportive and interactive relationship between members of the Safer Internet Centre and Government Departments and agencies, as well as promotes alignment of Government priorities and the Centre's activities where appropriate and draws on the expertise of members in the formulation of public policy.

Stakeholder involvement

Stakeholder involvement enquires how different stakeholders can participate in policy development. Children's involvement in policy-making is one such key issue. Additionally, international knowledge exchange about children's digital participation is also relevant to this topic.

- **Various groups exist across different branches of government**, in which stakeholders may contribute to policy discussion and development.
- **Members of the public are regularly and routinely** consulted as part of the policy development process.
- **Children are actively involved in the design of policies** related to their participation in the digital environment. There are specially designed structures in place for this purpose.

	High	Medium	Low	Not present
Stakeholder forum		X		
Consulting the public on BIK topics	X			

Involvement of young people

X

Table 4: Topic summary - Stakeholder involvement

- Since its establishment, [Coimisiún na Meán](#) has undertaken extensive public and stakeholder consultation, including on the development and application of the online safety code. In particular, An Coimisiún has established a [Youth Advisory Committee](#), as required by the OSMR Act. This Committee has advised on a number of matters, including the online safety code and the development of online safety resources for post-primary schools. The Committee comprises representatives of nine organisations representing children and young people and nine individual young people under 25. Section 19 of the OSMR Act also enabled the creation of additional stakeholder advisory committees.
- Public consultations were an integral part of developing the OSMR Act, and continue to be for [Coimisiún na Meán](#) in implementing Ireland's Online Safety Framework. The OSMR Act and online safety policies have generally been subject to significant public and political debate, as illustrated by the large number of responses to consultations on the topic.
- Ireland's commitment to youth involvement in decision-making is rooted in the [National Framework for Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making](#), which was informed by renowned expert Professor Laura Lundy. The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth established [Hub na nÓg](#) to champion youth voices in policy discussions. The Hub is the national centre of excellence and coordination. It supports government departments, state agencies, and non-government organisations in giving children and young people a voice in decision-making on issues that affect their lives, focusing on those that are seldom heard.

BIK+ actions

Pillar 1 – Safe digital experiences

Safe digital experiences refers to actions taken to protect children from harmful and illegal online content, conduct, contact, and risks as young consumers and to improve their well-being online through a safe, age-appropriate digital environment created in a way that respects children's best interests.

Implementing EU laws

- As Ireland's Digital Services Coordinator, [Coimisiún na Meán](#) supervises, enforces, and monitors the implementation of the EU Digital Services Act. Since 17 February 2024, Coimisiún na Meán has been overseeing regulated entities within its remit, prioritising the protection of minors in its supervisory activities. It has also received and processed user complaints on this and other matters, using this feedback to inform its supervisory approach. Additionally, Coimisiún na Meán collaborates closely with the European Commission to fulfil the DSA's requirements concerning the protection of minors.
- [Coimisiún na Meán](#) serves as vice-chair of a European Board for Digital Services Working Group focused on the protection of minors. The group's current work programme includes developing guidelines under Article 28 of the DSA. The purpose of these guidelines, as outlined in Article 28(4), is to assist online platforms accessible to minors in meeting their obligation to put in place appropriate and proportionate measures to ensure a high level of privacy, safety and security of minors on their services.

Harmful online content

- The [Online Safety Code](#) is based on the [Online Safety and Media Regulation](#) (OSMR) Act and the EU Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD), which identify the scope of harms that may be included in the Code. The OSMR Act provides that specific categories of online content will fall under the definition of 'harmful online content'.

- Under the OSMR, the media regulator, [Coimisiún na Meán](#), is empowered to investigate and issue notices requiring online platforms to take down specifically defined harmful content.
- [Coimisiún na Meán](#) can receive complaints about a relevant provider's compliance with its systemic obligations under the Online Safety Framework. The OSMR Act enables An Coimisiún to develop an individual complaints mechanism, though this has not yet been implemented.
- Since February 2024, [Coimisiún na Meán](#) can receive complaints from users of online services who believe the provider of an online service has not complied with its obligations under the EU Digital Service Act. It is within [Coimisiún na Meán's](#) remit to assess if providers of an online service are doing what they are obliged to do under the Digital Services Act in relation to illegal content.

Harmful online conduct

- Ireland was one of the first countries in the EU to outlaw intimate image abuse. The [Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020](#) (Coco's Law) provides for offences related to the non-consensual distribution of intimate images.
- Ireland has several laws and policies in place to protect children and young people against cyberbullying. Relevant Laws include: the [Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020 \(Coco's Law\)](#). The [Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person Act 1997](#) can also be used in cyberbullying cases. It prohibits offences such as threats to kill or cause serious harm and assault.
- With regard to relevant policies, [Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying](#) provides a collective vision and clear roadmap for how the whole education community and society can work together to prevent and address bullying in our schools.

Age verification

- Part A of the [Online Safety Code](#) contains a general obligation for service providers to, as appropriate, establish and operate age verification systems

for service users with respect to content which may impair the physical, mental or moral development of minors.

- [Coimisiún na Meán](#) is collaborating nationally and at EU-level in relation to age-verification, including in the context of the recent tender for the development of a privacy-preserving age verification solution, both in terms of the necessary technical specifications and the development of an application enabling such verification.

Commercial content

- The [Online Safety Code](#) requires video-sharing platform services providers to take a range of measures, as appropriate, to protect children and the general public from programmes, user-generated videos and audiovisual commercial communications which may impair their physical, mental, or moral development.
- [Guidance](#) has been jointly developed by the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission and the Advertising Standards Authority of Ireland (ASAI) on influencer advertising and marketing. This guidance provides information about how to correctly label content and to comply with consumer protection law and ASAI standards.

Mental health and well-being

- The [Online Safety Code](#) is concerned with protecting the mental, moral and physical well-being of children and includes definitions for harmful content which are relevant to children, including requirements with respect to suicide, self-harm, eating and feeding disorders.
- On 4 September 2024, the Minister for Health established an [Online Health Taskforce](#) to develop a public health response to harms caused to children and young people by certain types of online activity. Among its terms of reference is the requirement to detail the range of social, mental health, physical health and sexual health harms being caused to young people by certain types of online behaviours and content.

	In place	In development	Other activity	Not in place
Codes of practice	X			
DSC implemented		X		
Definition of harmful content	X			
Bodies can order content removal	X			
Children's complaints mechanism			X	
Intimate image abuse laws	X			
Cyberbullying laws	X			
Age verification requirements	X			
Digital identity systems (EUDI)			X	
Consumer codes of practice	X			
Mental health measures	X			
Addressing unfair commercial practices		X		

Table 5: Topic summary - pillar 1: safe digital experiences

Pillar 2 – Digital empowerment

Digital empowerment incorporates actions so that all children, including those in vulnerable situations, acquire the necessary skills and competences to make sound choices and express themselves in the online environment safely and responsibly.

Supports for online safety education

- Online safety is fully incorporated into the national school curriculum in Ireland at multiple levels, most specifically through the [Social, Personal and Health Education \(SPHE\)](#) curriculum.
- In February 2023, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) published the updated [Junior Cycle SPHE Curriculum](#), which takes an increased focus on online safety and helping students safely navigate the online world. An example learning outcome is to 'explore why young people

share sexual imagery online and examine the risks and consequences of doing this.’

- several national-level frameworks support online safety in Irish schools, including [Oide.ie](#), the support service for teachers and school leaders. This also includes [Webwise.ie](#), the Irish Internet Safety Awareness Centre funded by the Department of Education and co-funded by the European Commission.
- The Minister for Education launched a plan in November 2023 to encourage parents to avoid buying smartphones for their children in primary schools. The policy [Keeping Childhood Smartphone Free](#) provides a guide for parents and parents’ associations who wish to engage with their school community regarding internet safety and access to smartphones for primary school children. The initiative also includes additional supports for parents and teachers around supporting children online.

Digital literacy skills to empower young people

- Digital literacy skills training in the curriculum is in development and evolving rather than well-embedded. The Eurydice Report [Digital Education at School in Europe](#) (2019) found shortcomings in technical support and specific approaches to digital competence development.
- A 2022 Educational Research Centre (ERC) report, [Digital Technologies in Education: Ireland in International Context](#) found that Ireland was “substantially” below the EU and OECD averages on measures of student digital technology use for learning – both inside and outside the school, in part attributed to the lack of technical and training supports for teachers and for schools.
- At a policy level, the [Digital Strategy for Schools 2021-2027](#) champions embedding digital competencies across all levels, not just specific technology or computer-based classes. The strategy aims for every school to have a Digital Learning Plan focusing on skills and infrastructure.

	In place	In development	Other activity	Not in place
Teaching online safety	X			
Online safety policies in schools	X			
Informal education about online safety			X	
Adequate teacher training		X		
Basic digital skills training		X		
Critical media literacy	X			
Creative digital skills	X			

Table 6: Topic summary - pillar 2: digital empowerment

Pillar 3 – Active participation, respecting children’s rights

Active participation, respecting children’s rights, refers to actions which give children and young people a say in the digital environment, with more child-led activities to foster innovative and creative safe digital experiences.

Active participation

Various national/regional activities promote active participation, youth civic engagement and advocacy

- Since 2023, [Coimisiún na Meán](#) has established and consulted with its Youth Advisory Committee across a range of issues. This Committee comprises representatives from organisations that work with and/or on behalf of children and young people, as well as individuals under the age of 25. The Committee has provided valuable insights on key [Coimisiún na Meán](#) initiatives, including the [Online Safety Code](#) and its application; [Rights, Rules and Reporting Online](#) educational resources; and the review of the broadcasting moratorium.
- The [Webwise Youth Advisory Panel](#) involves young people contributing ideas and insights on online safety issues. Through its [Ambassador Programme](#), Webwise trains secondary school students in Safer Internet Day-related

topics, building their capacity to lead workshops and awareness activities for younger students and even their own schools, fostering leadership and promotes a proactive approach to online safety.

Supporting children's rights

- In 2024, [Coimisiún na Meán](#) published a suite of educational resources, Rights, Rules and Reporting Online, for young people, parents and post-primary school teachers. Developed with Webwise and with input from young people, these resources aim to raise awareness of young people's rights under the Online Safety Framework.
- [Young Ireland: the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2023-2028](#), includes an action to publish child-friendly versions of policies and strategies relevant to children and young people, for various age groups. Work is progressing on this action, with further plans to develop guidance on developing child-friendly documentation currently being considered. This is in line with the [Customer Communications Toolkit for the Public Service](#), published by the then Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in 2018.
- Among existing organisations, the [Ombudsman for Children's Office \(OCO\)](#) promotes child-focused decision- making, sometimes issues child-friendly summaries of findings from their research.

Digital inclusion

- The [National Digital Strategy, Harnessing Digital](#), targets delivering connectivity to even the most remote rural locations, including through full delivery of the National Broadband Plan, and includes one of the most ambitious targets in the EU; to ensure that all Irish households and businesses will be covered by a Gigabit network service no later than 2028.
- The importance of inclusivity in ensuring meaningful children's participation is explicitly recognised in the [Young Ireland Framework](#). This outlines actions that are being taken to ensure that the permanent participation structures supported by DCEDIY are accessible to seldom heard young people, which

can include young people living with disability, and to provide guidance to policy makers and those wishing to consult with them effectively.

- **Comhairle na nÓg**, child and youth councils in each of the 31 Local Authority areas across Ireland, give children and young people a voice in the development of local and national services and policies. The **National Youth Assembly of Ireland** convenes on specific policy areas, such as climate, rural development and other issues of national importance. The Assembly is made up of delegates from **Comhairle na nÓg** (youth councils), youth organisations and relevant non-governmental organisations.

	In place	In development	Other activity	Not in place
Promoting active participation and civic engagement	X			
Involvement in policymaking	X			
Awareness raising on children's rights	X			
Child-friendly versions of policy documents		X		
Addressing digital inequalities	X			
Supports for marginalised groups	X			
Positive digital content			X	

Table 7: Topic summary - pillar 3: active participation, respecting children's rights

Best practices

Example 1: Ireland's Online Safety Code

On 21 October 2024, Coimisiún na Meán published and adopted its first [Online Safety Code](#), following extensive public and stakeholder consultation, as well as engagement with its recently established Youth Advisory Committee. The code applies binding obligations to designated video-sharing platform services and gives practical effect to the requirements as set out in Article 28b of Directive 2018/1808/EU (revised Audiovisual Media Services Directive). In particular, the code requires designated services to operate effective complaints handling mechanisms, age-verification systems, parental controls features, and content rating systems. Coimisiún na Meán holds robust monitoring and enforcement powers to ensure compliance with the Online Safety Code, including the power to impose administrative financial sanctions in accordance with the Online Safety and Media Regulation Act. The code has brought an end to the era of self-regulation and will ensure accountability, but most significantly, bring about a safer online world, particularly for children.

Example 2: Webwise Digital Citizenship Champions Programme

This [programme](#) is an initiative designed to empower primary school teachers with the essential knowledge, skills, and resources to effectively teach digital citizenship. In a rapidly evolving digital world, it is crucial for teachers to guide students in navigating the online environment safely, ethically, and responsibly, and foster a comprehensive understanding of digital citizenship.

Example 3: Webwise Online Safety Review Tool

The [Webwise Online Safety Review Tool](#) is designed to help schools review their online safety policies and practices. The review tool is designed to support schools at all stages of the journey in identifying strengths and areas for improvement across key areas, including culture and environment, relationships and partnerships, and policy, planning and practice.

BIK+ index 2025: Ireland

The BIK+ index has been developed to provide an aggregated at-a-glance overview of the levels of implementation across the two dimensions, BIK policies and BIK+ actions, in Ireland compared to the EU27+2 average. Values are shown in per cent.



Figure 1: BIK+ index 2025: Ireland - EU27+2 average comparison



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