

Schools Frequently Asked Questions 2022

What is a Creative Associate?

Creative Associates (CAs) are artists, creative practitioners and/or educators with an understanding of the arts and creativity and its potential to transform the lives of children and young people. They will support your school to deepen the arts and creative opportunities for children and young people and develop your understanding of creativity and how it can be used across the curriculum. They will act as a critical friend and challenge your school to think in new and different ways.

CAs have extensive knowledge of and broad experience across a wide range of arts and creative practices and processes in educational settings. They will help you to match the needs of your school to arts and creative opportunities. Over two years they will build a relationship with your school community and will support your school to develop a vision and a sustainable Creative School (CS) Plan for the arts and creativity.

What will the Creative Associate do?

The CA will support your school as you work through the stages of your CS Journey.

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Your CA will take time to establish a rapport with your school that will support effective working relationships between themselves, the staff, and the students. CAs will go about this relationship-building process in a variety of creative ways. They may also present themselves, their role, and details of the CS programme to the wider school.

They will support your school to carry out an analysis of your current engagement with the arts and creativity and the current resources in your schools and wider community. They will explore your school's understanding of creativity and help you discover the artistic and creative experiences and interests of your school community.

Your CA will work with your School Coordinator (SC) to arrange creative conversations with the whole school community. This could, for example, take the form of setting up a student advisory group, teacher/parent surveys or student voice workshops. Through this process your school's strengths and areas for development are identified. While working on this analysis your school might consider pilot workshops, activities, or research.

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At this point, your CA will begin to research ways in which your individual development priorities and needs can be developed. They will work with your SC to meet these needs by forming links between the school and the wider arts and creative community and will assist the school in liaising with creative practitioners, cultural institutes, and organisations. Finally, the CA will work with your SC to plan how to celebrate and evaluate your work as a CS.

Does the Creative Associate facilitate and deliver projects with us?

The CA is there to support you to develop and evaluate your CS Plan. Their role is not to facilitate and deliver projects as artists or practitioners in their own arts/creative discipline but they will advise and help to identify others who can.

As part of their role in developing the CS Plan, the CA may facilitate activities and workshops that will help them to understand your school community and gather information relating to the needs of your school.

How much time does the Creative Associate get to work with the school?

The CA has been allocated up to 45 hours with your school per year.

Does all this time take place in the school?

These hours are split between contact time with the school, and research and development work. CAs will research opportunities for the school, contact individual practitioners and organisations, write reports, build resources, and review any paperwork needed by the school to draw down their award.

How best to schedule time with your Creative Associate?

The CAs contact time will be decided by the school in discussion with the CA. It should be carefully planned to make best use of the CA's time e.g., the CA may undertake creative consultation in classrooms or with a focus group, committee or council followed by a meeting with staff or the SC. The SC and the CA work together on a schedule that works for them both.

What is the Creative School Planning Framework?

The Creative Schools Planning Framework (CSPF) supports your school and your CA to carry out an analysis of your current engagement with the arts and creativity and the current resources within your school and wider community.

This analysis helps you to develop a sustainable plan which will deepen arts and creative opportunities for children and young people in your school. It allows your school to make considered decisions on the design and delivery of activities and to report on progress to the Arts Council. It is an aid to support your SC and your CA to have important conversations with the wider school including children and young people, school leaders and families.

How does consultation with children/young people work?

Your commitment as a school to ensuring the voice of children and young people in decision-making is central to the CS process is an important priority of the CS programme. The National Framework for Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making supports this process and can be found [here](#).

Your CA will work with the SC to agree how best to consult with your students throughout the process. This may include supporting the creation of a new student advisory group, running consultation sessions with students, supporting the development of a survey for the whole school, feeding back on consultation, and ensuring the students have a voice during the implementation and evaluation stages of the process.

Who else will the Creative Associate need to talk to?

To support the development of your CS Plan the CA will want to talk to as many people from the school community as possible. This will include:

- Children / Young People
- Teachers / Staff
- School Management
- Parents / Guardians / Families
- Artists / Creative Practitioners that the school already has a relationship with.

What commitment is required from our school?

During the application process your school agreed to commit to the following:

- We commit that our School Coordinator will attend all required training courses and that we will facilitate attendance at non-required courses, where possible.
- We will establish regular contact and maintain good communications with the Creative Associate assigned to our school/centre.
- We will ensure our School Coordinator has significant time to work with the Creative Associate throughout our time in the initiative. We are aware that substitution payment is not available for these ongoing activities.
- Our management team will mobilise our school/centre community to engage with the Creative Schools initiative.
- We commit to providing significant time and resources to developing, implementing, and evaluating our Creative Schools Plan. This will include drawing on the time of staff, children and young people, families, and the Board of Management.
- We commit to ensuring the voice of children and young people is central to the school's/centre's participation and to the development, implementation, and evaluation of the Creative School Plan.
- Our school/centre will evaluate and report on our experience in order to share learning, and to inform planning and further policy development in this area.
- Our school/centre will cooperate with research and evaluation relating to Creative Schools.

I am the School Coordinator. What am I responsible for?

The SC is the main contact for the CA in the school.

The tasks associated with this role may include:

- Maintaining contact with the CA.
- Supporting the induction of the CA to the school and providing them with access to relevant schools policies.
- Making sure the CA is informed on who is the DLP and DDLP in the school.
- Identifying students to take part in advisory and or/focus groups and establishing these groups.

- Giving CS visibility in the school and the wider community.
- Informing the CA of any challenges they are experiencing in relation to engaging with the CS initiative.
- Acting as a conduit of communication between the CA and the wider school including the school management.
- Organising meetings with various stakeholders as required.
- Supporting the selection, contracting, payment and Garda vetting of artists and creative practitioners who will work with the school in line with the school's policies.
- Working on the CSPF documents with the CA.
- Engaging the Creative School's evaluation process.
- Uploading reporting documentation on OLS (the Arts Council online system you made your application through).
- Being the point of contact for payment of your award from the Arts Council and maintaining accurate and up to date contact information with CS central team.
- Requesting payments in a timely fashion.

Is the School Coordinator a voluntary role?

Yes, being a SC is a voluntary role. It works best when the CA has one main point of contact in the school. However, it is important to engage other colleagues in the process from the beginning as this will support the embedding of your work across the school. Other colleagues can also act as an important support to the SC, and they may take on responsibilities for activities or tasks.

If I must leave my class to support CS work, who is responsible for my substitution?

The school is responsible for organising cover if needed. Paid substitution is only available for one day for the SC to attend CS induction training.

How much funding do we receive as a Creative School?

The total funding available to 2022 participating schools is €4,000. This is an award to implement your plans over two school years 2022-2023 and 2023-2024.

How can we use the funding?

The funding should be used to support the implementation of your CS Plan and to achieve the ideas that were generated from the consultation process. In consultation with the CA, your school can decide on how they wish to use the funding. This may include:

- Working with artists and/or creative practitioners
- Visits to galleries, theatres, cinemas, museums, libraries, and the local arts centre
- Arts and creative professional development for teachers
- Engaging with local arts and creative organisations
- Developing arts and creativity policies and plans
- Providing workshops, exhibitions, or performance opportunities for the children/young people in your school
- Exploring creative ways to teach and learn across the curriculum
- Purchasing materials and resources which support the implementation of your plan.

We already know what we want to do. Can we go ahead?

Whilst this can be frustrating, we advise you to wait until your CA has had the opportunity to consult and work with you and your school community before you begin spending your award. Many schools find that the consultation process allows new voices to be heard and innovative ideas and opportunities to emerge. It is especially important, and part of the commitment you made during the application process, that your students are consulted before deciding on what you would like to do and how you intend to spend the award.

We proposed a project in our application form. Can we start this now?

In the application process, schools were asked to provide details of how participation in the initiative would support your school's learning and development in the arts and creativity rather than requesting a proposal for a particular project. If you did propose a project, we ask you to hold off starting it until your CA has had the opportunity to work with you and your school. Your plans may change as a result of going through the Understand process with your CA and as a result of consulting with the students in your school.

What activities have other Creative Schools implemented as part of their Creative School Plan?

Each school's CS Plan is unique, and the activities implemented have been as rich and varied as the schools in the programme. Examples have included:

- Workshops for students across a wide range of arts and creative practices
- Using arts and creative approaches to explore the curriculum
- Projects which support the development of children's creativity skills in a range of curriculum areas
- Creative projects linked to key school development priorities
- Artist's residencies
- Continuous Professional Development for staff
- Visits to arts and cultural venues
- Creation of new learning spaces
- Long term partnership projects with artists and arts and cultural organisations.

Further examples of the vast array of wonderful activities implemented by schools across the country in the CS initiative are available here <https://www.artscouncil.ie/creative-schools/celebration-2021/>