

**LESSON PLAN**

# Young people and the law

**Learning outcome 3.6**

Identify laws that directly relate to their lives

## Students will learn

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- ▶ About laws which affect their lives
- ▶ About the workings of an Oireachtas committee meeting
- ▶ About Bills which may become laws in the future

## Materials

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- ▶ Slide show
- ▶ Factsheets 1 to 4 – two copies of each

## Assessment for learning/Key skills

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- ▶ Simulation of an Oireachtas committee meeting
- ▶ Working with others
- ▶ Being creative



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## 1 Introduction

### SLIDE 3

Introduce the topic of laws. Ask students to suggest laws which affect them. Take note of suggestions.

### SLIDE 4

Categorise these laws according to the four themes as follows:

Work

Education

Transport

Healthcare

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## 2 Watch an Oireachtas committee meeting

### SLIDE 5

Play an excerpt of the committee meeting video in slide 5.

**Note:** Note: the first 39 mins of the video are private session so scroll on to later in the video to see the members and witnesses discussing the topic.

You can read a transcript of the debate at: [www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/joint\\_committee\\_on\\_children\\_and\\_youth\\_affairs/2019-06-11](http://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/joint_committee_on_children_and_youth_affairs/2019-06-11)

The meeting explores the impact of homelessness on children. Explain how the meeting operates and what the various parties do – chairperson, witnesses from external organisations, and TDs and Senators who ask questions.

Explain that the class will now simulate an Oireachtas committee where they will discuss the laws that affect young people.

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## 3 Assign roles

### SLIDE 6

Divide the class into five groups:

Group 1: Expert group on work

Group 2: Expert group on transport

Group 3: Expert group on healthcare

Group 4: Expert group on education

Group 5: Oireachtas committee (a chairperson, two TDs and two Senators)

Give groups 1 to 4 the relevant factsheets (see pages 4-7). Ask them to examine the laws and decide if there is a law they wish to see changed or a new law introduced. They must prepare their argument and elect a spokesperson who will speak on their behalf at the Oireachtas committee meeting.

Ask group 5 to elect a chairperson, two TDs and two Senators who will listen to the submissions, question each proposal and decide if the proposal should become a Bill and possibly a law. Give group 5 all four factsheets to read in preparation for the meeting.

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## 4 Prepare for the committee meeting simulation

### SLIDE 7

Allow each group 15 minutes to prepare for the meeting. The groups can make speaking notes on their factsheets.

**Note:** You may need to clarify the roles of the various committee members and expert group witnesses, and what the students will have to do in the meeting simulation.

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## 5 Simulate the committee meeting

### SLIDE 8

Ask the chairperson of the Oireachtas committee (group 5) to call the class to order and begin the meeting. During the meeting:

- 1 The chairperson welcomes the spokespersons, introduces them and calls each one in turn to make their statements.
- 2 Each spokesperson makes their statement outlining their group's proposal.
- 3 The committee members question the spokespersons about their proposals.
- 4 The committee members discuss the proposals and decide which ones they believe should become Bills and, maybe, laws.
- 5 The chairperson announces the Committee's decision.

If the proposed new Bill is sponsored by a Minister it will be known as a Government Bill; if it is sponsored by an ordinary TD or Senator it will be known as a Private Members' Bill and it will have to be discussed during "Private Members' business".

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## 6 Look at current Bills in progress

### SLIDE 9

Look at some of the Bills which are currently before the Houses. Pick out and discuss any Bills that might be interesting to the students.

You can find current Bills in the **Bills & Acts section of the Oireachtas website** or search for your local TDs' Member profile pages in the **TDs & Senators section** to see which Bills they have sponsored recently.

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## → Extension activities

- ▶ Write a report on the committee meeting simulation for the school newsletter.
- ▶ Write to your local politician outlining your discussions and any proposals that you would like to see become a new law.







