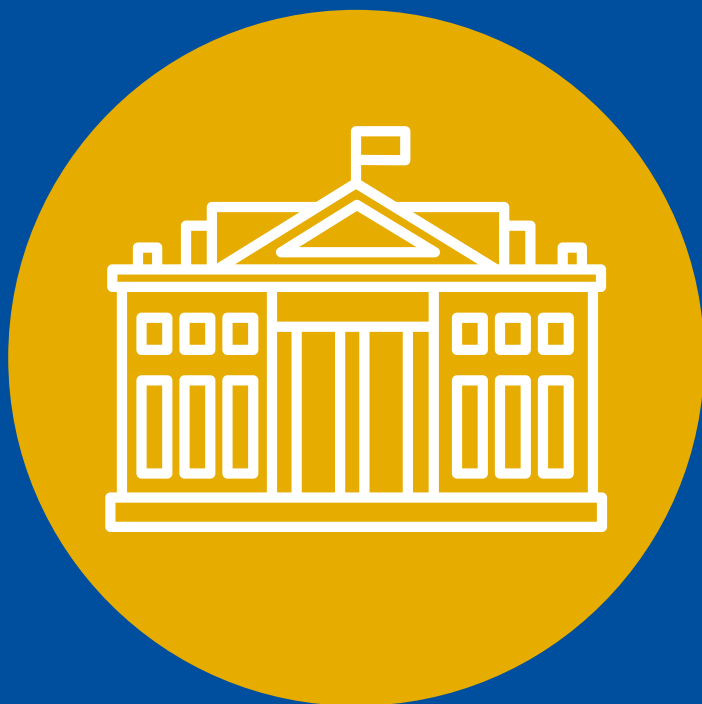


Presidential Election



**Easy-to-Read
Guide**



Easy-to-Read Guide to the Presidential Election

How to use this guide



We wrote this guide in an Easy-to-Read format.



We wrote some important words in **bold**.

This means the letters are thicker and darker.

We explain what these bold words mean.



There is a list of these words on page 17.



You can ask for support to read this guide.

A friend, family member or support person might be able to help you.

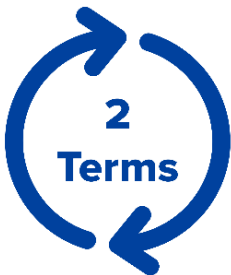


What is a presidential election?

A presidential election is how the people of Ireland select the new President.



In Ireland there is a **presidential election** every 7 years. Each **presidential term** is 7 years long.



The President can run for re-election after they have already had one term as President. But they are not allowed to be President for more than 2 terms.



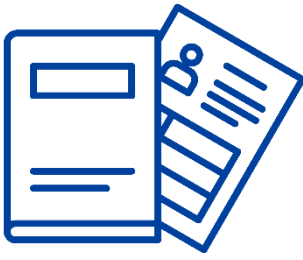
On the election day, people who have the right to **vote** can vote.



You have the right to vote in a presidential election if you are:

- Aged 18 years old or older
- and
- An Irish citizen living in Ireland
- and
- On the **electoral register**.





What is the President's role?

The President is Ireland's **Head of State**. The President's roles are set out in the Constitution. In Irish this is called Bunreacht na hÉireann.



The President's roles include:

- Representing the people of Ireland,
 - By attending events and making speeches in Ireland and abroad and having visitors to their official house in Phoenix Park.
- Appointing the Taoiseach, members of the **Government**, judges, and other official roles.
 - Once they are first nominated by Dáil Éireann, the Government or the Taoiseach.
- Calling for the start and end of the **Dáil**,
 - Once the Taoiseach asks the President to do so.
- Calling for either of the Houses of the Oireachtas to meet,
- Signing bills so they become new laws,
 - Once a bill has been passed by both the Dáil and Seanad the President will sign it into law.
- Sending some bills to the Supreme Court,
 - If a new bill does not work with the Constitution the President may send it to the Supreme Court.
- Being the Supreme Commander of the Defence Forces.



The President does not make decisions for the State. This is the role of the Government. You can find more details on our website at www.electoralcommission.ie/presidential-elections/



Previous and Current Presidents

There have been 8 previous Presidents.

Michael D. Higgins is the current President of Ireland.

He was elected in 2011. Then re-elected in 2018. He is finishing his second term. He can only be President for two terms.



Who can be President?

To be eligible for the role of the President, you must be:

- An Irish Citizen
and
- Aged 35 years old or older.

How do candidates get nominated?

There are 3 different ways for a **candidate** to get nominated to run for election to be President of Ireland.

Candidates can be:

- Nominated by at least 20 members of the Oireachtas (**TDs** or **Senators**)
or
- Nominated by at least 4 local authorities (city or county councils).

A current President can also:

- Nominate themselves if they have only served 1 term.





How do you register to vote?

Before you can vote, you **must join the electoral register. You only need to register once.**



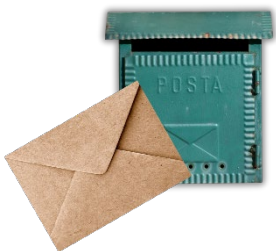
If you have become an Irish citizen since you registered to vote, you will need to update your details to vote in a Presidential election.



If you have moved address, you should also update your details.



You can register and update your details on www.checktheregister.ie or by contacting your local authority.



Postal voting

If you have an illness or disability, you might be able to vote by post. This is called a **postal vote**.

Some people can also vote by post because of the job they do.



You need to apply for a postal vote in advance.

We have some information about postal voting.

You can find it on our website:

www.electoralcommission.ie/accessible-voting/



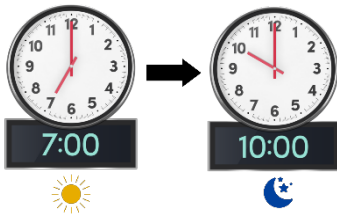
When do you vote?

We will tell people what the election date is once we know. The election date is also called **Polling Day**.

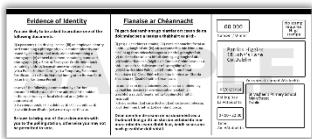


You can learn about the election if you:

- Ask a family member, friend, or neighbour.
- Watch the news on TV.
- Search online.



On election day, voting usually opens at 7am and closes at 10pm.



This information will be on your **polling information card**. This will be posted to you. If your polling card does not arrive, do not worry as you do not need it to vote.



Voter checklist

- Look on www.checktheregister.ie to make sure that your details are right on the register.



- Learn about the each of the **candidates** running to be President.



- Watch for your polling information card to arrive in the post.



- Make your plan to vote on the day. You might want a person you trust to get you there.



- Bring Photo **ID** with you to the polling station on Polling Day.



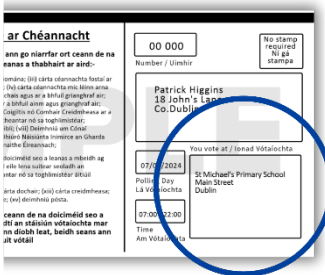
Where do you vote?

On election day, you go to a building called a **polling station** to vote.



For example, it could be a:

- School.
- Community centre.
- GAA Club.



Your polling station will be on your polling information card. The opening hours will be on this too.



You can also check where your polling station is and when it opens and closes on:

www.checktheregister.ie



The polling station

When you go into the polling station, there will be polling staff. They are people who work at polling stations on election day. It is their job to help you.



What will the staff do?

The staff will ask you some questions before you vote such as:



What is your full name?

Tell the staff your:

- First name
- Last name



You should bring **ID** in case you are asked for it.

This could include:

- Passport
- Driver's license
- Public Services Card



You can check our website for a list of what you can use for ID. www.electoralcommission.ie



Your ballot paper

They will give you a piece of paper called a ballot paper. A ballot paper is where you mark your vote. Take your ballot paper to one of the voting booths.



The screens let you fill out your ballot papers where no one else can see.



There will be a pencil for you to use. But you can use your own pen or pencil if you want to.



You can see samples of what a ballot paper will look like on our website:
<https://www.electoralcommission.ie/presidential-elections/>

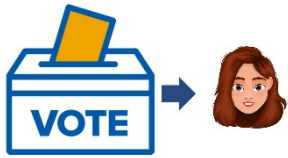


Who should I vote for?

Your vote is your choice, and you can choose any person that you like or that you think will speak for you the best.



You should think carefully about it and vote for the person who you think will do the best job as President of Ireland.

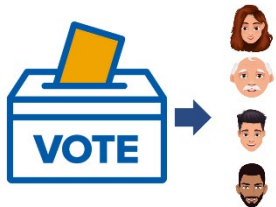


How to vote

- You can vote for one candidate if you wish.



- You can vote for more than one candidate if you wish.



Or

- You can vote for them all.

It is your choice.

Put a number “1” in the box beside the candidate you want to vote for. This is your preferred candidate.



Put a number “2” beside your second preference candidate.

Put a number “3” beside your third preference candidate. And so on.



You can vote for as many people as you like. There is a video on our website that helps explain how to vote:

www.electoralcommission.ie/how-to-vote/



What if you need help voting?

If you need help when you vote, you can:

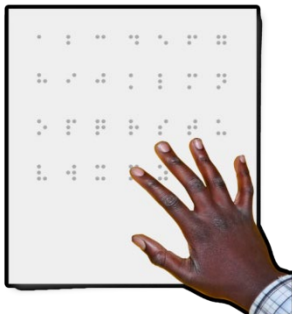
- Take someone you know with you, like a friend, or
- Ask the staff for help.



The staff can help you fill out your ballot paper if you ask.

They cannot tell you who to vote for.

They will keep your vote a secret.



If you use braille you can ask for a Ballot Paper Template.

More information is on our website:

www.electoralcommission.ie/accessible-voting/



What if you make a mistake?

If you make a mistake when you fill out your ballot paper, take it back to the staff who gave it to you.

Tell the staff that you:

- Made a mistake.
- Need a new ballot paper.



The staff will:

- Take the ballot paper with the mistake.
- Give you a new ballot paper.

Take the new ballot paper and fill it out.



Where do you put your ballot paper?

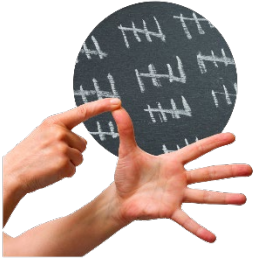
When you have filled out your ballot paper, you need to put it in the **ballot box**.

This will be the box beside the staff who gave you the ballot paper.

A ballot box is a sealed box where voters put their ballot papers once they have filled them out.



When you put your marked ballot paper in the ballot box, you have finished voting.



The counting of votes

- Every vote is brought to **count centres** in each constituency around Ireland. People are hired to count every vote to see which candidate has the most votes.



- The candidate with the most votes wins.



- All the number 1 votes are always counted first.



- If a candidate does not receive enough votes they are **eliminated**. Their number 2 or lower votes are then counted. These types of votes are called transfers.



- The **quota** is the number of votes a candidate needs to get elected. The quota in a presidential election is 50% of the total number of votes plus 1 extra vote.



- When a candidate reaches the quota, they are deemed elected. A candidate can be elected without reaching the quota if all other candidates have been eliminated.



- The winning candidate will then be elected as the President of Ireland.



How will I know who won?

The winner of the presidential election will be on the news on TV and radio. You can check who won on the internet, on social media or you can check the newspapers.

Information you find online



People are now using social media, online messaging, and the internet to discuss current affairs, political topics, and elections. We are getting a huge amount of information online from lots of different places.



The internet can be very helpful in getting facts and information and sharing different views.

You might come across information about the elections online. This information might not always be true or only a bit true.

What can you do?

When you are reading, watching videos or programmes, or listening to podcasts online or in the media, always ask yourself:



- How do I know this is true?
- Who is telling me this?
- Why are they telling me this?
- How can I confirm this? /How can I find out if this is right?
- Do I need to think about this some more?



Word list

This list explains what the **bold** words in this document mean.



Ballot box

A ballot box is a sealed box where voters put their ballot papers once they have filled them out.



Candidate

A candidate is a person running for election.



Count centres

This is where the counting of votes happens when the ballot boxes arrive from all the polling stations within the electoral area.



Dáil

The Dáil is part of the national parliament. It is where elected TDs meet.



Eliminated

An eliminated candidate is a candidate who does not win in an election and whose votes are transferred to the remaining candidates.



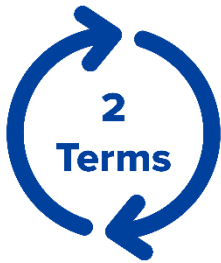
Electoral register

A list of people who can vote.



Presidential election

A presidential election is for the whole country. It is how the people of Ireland select the new President.



Presidential term

A presidential term is the length of time a person is president. One term is 7 years. You can only be President for 2 terms.



Government

The government is the group of people who are responsible for leading the country.

Identification or ID

Identification or ID is a document or card that proves who you are. It has your name and a photo of you on it. For a full list of ID that you can use, visit our 'Where to Vote' webpage:

<https://www.electoralcommission.ie/where-to-vote/>





Polling Day

The day voting takes place. People also call this election day.



Polling information card

A Polling Information Card will tell you the details of your polling station. If your polling card does not arrive, do not worry as you do not need it to vote.



Polling station

A polling station is a building where people go to vote.

For example, a:

- School.
- Community centre.
- GAA Club.



Postal vote

A postal vote allows some people to post their vote. This means they do not need to go to a polling station to vote.



Quota

The number of votes that a candidate needs to win a seat.



Senators

Senators are members of Seanad Éireann which is part of the national parliament.



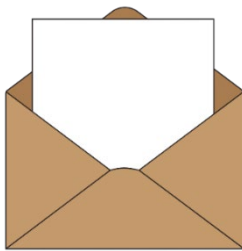
TDs

TD stands for Teachta Dála. TDs represent people from different constituencies around the country.



Vote

A vote happens when a group of people make a choice. Each person has their own vote. When you vote you are saying who you are choosing to represent you.



For more information

Postal address:

An Coimisiún Toghcháin, Block M, Dublin Castle,
Dublin 2, D02 X8X8



Email address:

info@electoralcommission.ie

Social media:

@ElecCommIRL

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www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read



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