

What age can I...?

Activity	Age	Further details
<i>Education</i>		
Start pre-school	No minimum age for pre-school	
Participate in Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE)	2 years and 8 months	Children must be at least 2 years and 8 months on 1 September of the year of enrolment
Start primary school	4	
Compulsory age for starting primary school	6	
Start second-level education	12	Children must be 12 on 1 January in their first academic year of secondary school
Leave school	16	You can leave school at 16 or after completing 3 years of secondary school – whichever happens later
<i>Employment</i>		
Start working	14	Children aged 14 or over can work up to 7 hours per day (35 hours per week) during school holidays only There are other rules about hours of work and minimum rest periods
Work part-time	15	Children aged 15 and over can work up to 8 hours per week during term-time and up to 7 hours per day (35 hours per week) during school holidays There are other rules about hours of work and minimum rest periods
Work full-time	16 and 17	Children aged 16 and 17 can work up to 8 hours per day (40 hours per week) There are other rules about hours of work and minimum rest periods
Become a SOLAS apprentice	16	
Join the Army, Naval Service or Air Corps	18	
Join An Garda Síochána	18	
Babysit	No legal minimum age	However, a babysitter should be mature enough to meet the needs of small children and be able to respond in the right way if there was an unexpected incident at the house
<i>Cars and other vehicles</i>		
Drive a boat with an engine over 3.75kW (5hp)	12	
Drive a motorcycle up to 11kW and up to 125cc	16	
Drive a moped with a maximum speed of 45kph	16	
Drive a work vehicle like a tractor or JCB	16	
Drive a passenger car with seats for up to 8 passengers and maximum weight of 3,500kg	17	
Drive a motorcycle up to 35kW	18	
Drive goods vehicles between 3,500kg and 7,500kg	18	

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<i>Alcohol and cigarettes</i>		
Apply for a National Age Card	18	
Buy alcohol	18	
Be in a pub before 9pm (10pm from May to September)	No minimum age	Children under 15 must always be with a parent or guardian in a licensed premises
Be in a pub after 9pm (10pm from May to September)	15	Children under 15 can be in a licensed premises after 9 only if attending a private function at which a substantial meal is being served Otherwise a person under 18 is not permitted to be on a licensed premises after 9pm (10pm from May to September)
Drink Alcohol	18	A person under 18 can drink alcohol in a private residence, with parental consent
Buy cigarettes	18	
<i>Sexual activity</i>		
Consent to sexual activity	17	
Buy contraceptives	No minimum legal age	
Have an abortion	No minimum legal age	
<i>Voting and elections</i>		
Vote	18	
Run in a local election	18	
Run in a Dáil election	21	
Run for the Presidency	35	
<i>General</i>		
Gamble (including buying a lottery ticket)	18	A person over 16 can currently take part in gaming at an amusement hall or funfair However, it is intended to raise the minimum age to 18 in 2020
Give blood	18	
Get a body piercing or tattoo	No minimum legal age	It is at the discretion of the provider
Get teeth whitened	18	
Use a sunbed	18	
Get married	18	It is no longer possible to get a court exemption allowing a person aged 16 or 17 to marry
Get a gender recognition certificate	18	16 with a court exemption order after an application by the child's parent or guardian
Sit on a jury	18	
Digital age of consent	16	The digital age of consent refers to the age at which a person can consent to the holding and processing of their personal data online