



FREE BOOK SCHEME POLICY

INTRODUCTION

This policy was established in response to the Department of Education's Free School Book Scheme. Parents are no longer required to make any contribution towards the cost of schoolbooks, including workbooks and copybooks. This policy is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy, on request, to any person who requests it.

RATIONALE

This policy has been established in line with the Department of Education 'Schoolbooks Grant: Guidelines for Primary and Special Schools', published in March 2023. Primary schools and special schools will retain the discretion to implement the curriculum by choosing the books and resources that best meet the needs of their pupils. The scheme is operated by the school staff on behalf of the Board of Management with occasional assistance from parent volunteers.

BENEFITS

There are many benefits for parents, pupils and schools;

- The scheme will eliminate costs spent by parents each year on books.
- Parents no longer have the hassle of purchasing and covering books.
- As the school is buying in bulk, there will be a significant discount on price.
- All pupils will have access to a much wider range of textbooks, as the school will purchase additional class texts.
- The books will be purchased for the children, therefore eliminating confusion about different publications/editions.
- The school will own the books and will loan them to the pupils.

OPERATION OF THE BOOK SCHEME

All school books to be used during any school year are selected by the teaching staff as a whole. The principal operates the book scheme with the assistance of the deputy principal and nominated members of staff. Schools can use their discretion on how the

book grant is used while understanding it must eliminate the overall cost to parents of school books, workbooks and copybooks, and where possible, stationery. The scheme will firstly provide free school books, workbooks and copy books. Thereafter the grant funding will be used to eliminate costs of classroom resources and stationery. Any surplus grant can be used to purchase shared books, audio books and other materials to increase literacy and numeracy resources in a school. Alternatively, the surplus can be carried forward to the next school year. Schools should consider the need to replace or purchase new books in the following year when deciding how to use any surplus grant in the current year.

The Department does not propose to provide a prescriptive list of all items to be included by schools under 'related classroom resources'. It is expected that such items will differ from school to school. For the main part, this will refer to the resources a pupil will require to carry out curricular based literacy and numeracy schoolwork and should include, where funding permits, such items as pencils, pens, erasers, sharpeners, colouring pencils and whiteboard markers. For pupils in more senior classes, such resources may also include dictionaries, mathematical sets and calculators.

Related classroom resources may also include, where funding permits, items provided by primary schools where a charge was previously levied on parents, for example, art materials and photocopying.

It is recognised that the total book grant provided may not be sufficient to cover all related classroom resources. Schools must communicate with parents and inform them of the related classroom resources covered under the scheme. Where related classroom resources required cannot be covered under the scheme, parents must be advised of the arrangements in place for the provision of such items.

The Department recognises that in some circumstances children and young people enrolled in special schools and in special classes in mainstream primary schools may not use schoolbooks and/or workbooks or copybooks. A broader range of schoolbooks and resources may be required in these settings to meet the educational needs of the children and young people, including the need to provide an audio version of a schoolbook alongside the text version of the schoolbook.

ADMINISTRATOR DUTIES

- Compile booklists received from each individual class teacher and related classroom resources required for each class
- Establish, and list, the total number of schoolbooks, workbooks and copybooks that need to be purchased
- Establish budget breakdown
- Determine what related classroom resources will be covered by the grant
- Adhere to public procurement guidelines including seeking the required number of quotes from schoolbook shops and suppliers and adhering to advertising and tendering requirements where applicable
- Decide on a supplier for schoolbooks, workbooks, copybooks and any related classroom resources being provided and place order/s
- Liaise with shops and suppliers in relation to any issues
- Check all invoices against orders
- Check stock delivered against orders/invoices
- Arrange a suitable place to store stock
- Arrange for payment to issue to shops and suppliers in a timely manner
- Arrange for a cover to be placed on schoolbooks to help extend their lifespan
- Ensure that there is an adequate system in place to catalogue schoolbooks e.g. label/barcode/scanner system
- Sort books and related classroom resources by class grouping and within classes as appropriate
- Ensure all the necessary teaching resources/copyrights are provided by the relevant publishers
- Maintain financial records
- Communicate with parents
- Cooperate with the Department if selected to participate in the evaluation of the scheme

SELECTION OF SCHOOL BOOKS AND WORKBOOKS

Primary schools and special schools will continue to have autonomy to choose schoolbooks and workbooks that meet curricular requirements and, in the case of special schools and special classes, that meet the learning needs of the pupils.

A school's policy on the selection of schoolbooks should include consideration of the need for the schoolbooks and/or workbooks and a commitment to keeping a schoolbook on the booklist for a specified period of time. The school may use funding for digital media support which relates to teaching and learning within curricular requirements. Decisions regarding the use of digital technology, such as e-books, in schools is a matter for the board of Management / ETB of each school. Schools are advised to consult with members of the school community including parents when planning for the introduction of digital technologies with cost and other implications being fully considered. You can access advice on the use of digital media at:

<http://www.pdst.ie/DistanceLearning/DigitalLibraries>

<http://www.pdst.ie/DistanceLearning/DigitalLibraries> and

<http://www.pdst.ie/distancelearning/othersources>
<http://www.pdst.ie/distancelearning/othersources>

An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG) compile a list annually which provides up-to-date information on publications and teaching materials that support the teaching of Irish and the teaching of other subjects through the medium of Irish in primary schools. This list can be accessed on www.cogg.ie. COGG also organises workshops and exhibitions from time to time to inform teachers about the material available for Gaeltacht and Irish-medium schools. This information can be very valuable when decisions are being made on possible schoolbooks for individual subjects/class groups.

The timely provision of information is essential for the efficient administration of the scheme. To this end, class lists need to be made available to teachers as early as possible to enable them to quantify their book requirements/lists for the following year.

MAINTENANCE

- Pupils are responsible for all textbooks issued to them by the book scheme and are actively encouraged to take proper care them.
- Pupils should handle their books with care.
- Parents are encouraged to promote the care of school books. In the event that a book needs to be replaced, this will be provided for by the school.

- All text books are covered. If needed, we will request assistance from the PTA with this.
- Small labels with the child's name will be applied to the books by the school. Parents/pupils are not permitted to write their name on the book in any other place.
- No sellotape or staples are permitted on the books.
- Teachers also have a vital role to play in the proper care and condition of the textbooks.

REDUCE WASTE

St. David's N.S. will make every effort to reduce wastage under the scheme. The school will adopt a cost-conscious approach to the selection of schoolbooks, workbooks, copybooks and related classroom resources.

SWIMMING LESSONS AND OTHER SCHOOL BASED ACTIVITY

The primary schoolbook funding is ring-fenced for schoolbooks, workbooks, copybooks and related classroom resources. The cost of swimming lessons or any other similar school-based activity is not considered a legitimate expense under the free primary schoolbooks scheme.

MOVEMENT OF A PUPIL TO A NEW SCHOOL DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR

If a pupil moves school during the school year, the schoolbooks are returned to the first school. The new school will then provide the pupil with a complete set of schoolbooks, including workbooks, copybooks and any related classroom resources that were provided for other pupils at the start of the school year.

SCHOOLBOOKS GRANT - PARENTS WHO DO NOT WISH TO AVAIL OF THE FREE BOOK SCHEME

The main aim of the new scheme is to eliminate costs to parents of providing schoolbooks, workbooks and copybooks. In the unlikely event that a parent indicates that they do not wish to receive free schoolbooks under this scheme, the parent must be provided with the relevant class booklist(s) and they can make their own arrangements to source the necessary schoolbooks, workbooks, copybooks and any other resources provided by the school under the scheme. In such instances, the school is not obliged to refund the parent the cost of such purchases as the parent has clearly expressed their wish not to participate in the scheme.

PROTECTION OF COPYRIGHT

It is mandatory for any educational establishment, including primary schools, to have a licence in order to copy and reuse content from a variety of copyright-protected works. This licence is provided by the Irish Copyright Licensing Authority (ICLA).

RETURN OF BOOKS

- When books are finished in each class, they are returned to the school.
- A date will be decided by the principal as to when all books must be returned to the school. Parents will receive three weeks' notice of this date.

REVIEW OF THESE GUIDELINES

These guidelines may be reviewed from time to time as required. Any review will be notified to schools and Education Partners.

IMPLEMENTATION DATE

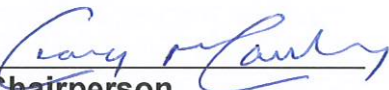
This policy will be fully implemented from September 2023.

TIMETABLE FOR REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed as required.

RATIFICATION & COMMUNICATION

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management on 26th June 2023.

Signed: 
Chairperson
Board of Management

Signed: 
Principal

Date: 26/06/23

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