

Financial Guideline 2021/2022 - 20

Voluntary Secondary and Community & Comprehensive Schools

Exceptional Minor Works Grant Funding with a particular focus on supporting enhanced ventilation – (Circular 65/2021)

1. Introduction

The purpose of this guideline is to provide details of the Exceptional Minor Works Grant Funding for Post Primary Schools in continuing to support the operation of schools generally and particularly within a Covid-19 environment, with a specific focus on providing additional support to schools for the implementation of the ventilation guidance published by the Department in May 2021.

The payment of these grants at this stage gives schools the opportunity to undertake any minor works including ventilation improvements at school level as a matter of priority. The minor works grant funding provides good flexibility to address issues at local school level and to take a targeted approach. Schools need not apply to the Department for approval to carry out works or to purchase items to improve ventilation. Larger scale works (beyond the level of this enhanced funding) can be addressed under the Department's Emergency Works Scheme.

This guideline should be read in conjunction with [Circular 0062/2013](#) "Grant Scheme for Minor Works to National School Properties", with the principles outlined in that circular also applying to Post Primary schools and the Department's document "[Practical Steps for the Deployment of Good Ventilation Practices in Schools](#)".

2. Accessing Technical Advice on Ventilation

In supporting schools in undertaking ventilation improvements, good guidance is available [here](#) on:

- Practical Steps for the Deployment of Good Ventilation Practices
- Carbon Dioxide Monitors (Your Questions Answered)
- Air Cleaners (Guidance for schools including HEPA Air Cleaner Technical Guidance in Appendix 1, Your Questions Answered)

Given that each school setting is different, individual schools are best placed to decide on the appropriate measures for their school and have flexibility in this regard. For instance, the funding also provides an opportunity for schools to enhance their outdoor learning environments for use as the weather permits.

Given that there is no one solution that fits all scenarios, schools may seek specific technical specialist advice/assistance of a Chartered Engineer or Registered Architect to advise on appropriate measures to take for enhancing ventilation. An Engineer or Architect who is currently, or has previously, worked on a project at the school may be well placed to give a school some initial advice on ventilation matters. This may include advice on the appropriate HEPA Air Cleaner unit as an additional measure in conjunction with other methods of ventilation that are available, which is matched to the specific room size, volume and existing ventilation arrangements in circumstances where poor ventilation continues to exist in a particular room/area after the recommended measures in the Practical Steps have been applied. Specialist advice/assistance of a Chartered Engineer or Registered Architect is an important source of support for schools.

The [HEPA Air Cleaner Technical Guidance](#) in Appendix 1 in the Room Air Cleaner Guidance document is particularly relevant here.

A dedicated team has been established in the Department of Education to support schools that may have concerns about ventilation. The team is also available to contact schools where required, walking through the steps that schools should take to deploy good ventilation practices etc. Where it is not possible for a school to access the expertise of an engineer or architect, and where necessary, a technical assessment to assist the school can be facilitated through the Department.

3. Minor Works Grant Payment Amount for post primary schools

The amount payable is based on the enrolment bands set out in the table below:

School Size (Enrolments)	Grant Amount
Up to 500	€20,000
501 to 750	€25,000
751 to 1000	€30,000
>1000	€35,000

4. Administration

The grant will be paid directly in one payment into the school bank account. It is envisaged that the payment will be processed in December 2021.

Applications from post-primary schools in the fee-charging sector will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Fee charging schools have been contacted directly by the FSSU in relation to the application process.

As with all exchequer grant-aid, school authorities should maintain detailed records on how funding, provided under this scheme, was spent. If there is any unused funding this should also be recorded.

Where there is insufficient funding to address specific ventilation enhancements schools can address this through the [Emergency Works Scheme](#).

Schools are required to adhere to procurement regulations and appropriately record costs paid from the grant received. A Chartered Engineer or Registered Architect can provide assistance to schools on procurement where required.

The payment of the grant at this time provides the opportunity to schools to undertake any minor works including ventilation improvements as a matter of priority. Schools, on request, must be in a position to provide the Department with a written statement of the expenditure of the grant (which may be subject to compliance checks by the Department) and also a record of any unused funding. The treatment and arrangements in respect of any unused funding will be notified to schools by the end of 2022.

5. Recording the grant income and expenditure on Sage 50/Surf Accounts

The existing Covid Minor Works Grant and Expenditure codes can be used to record the income and expenditure. These codes are set out in the tables below.

Covid Minor Works Grant (CMWG) used for capital purposes		
Grant income code	Expenditure Code	Example
3905 – Covid Minor Works Capital Grant Income	3941 – Covid Minor Works Building Expense	CMWG is used for the purposes of construction, alteration, extending the school building or structure
	1425 – Covid Minor Works Fixtures, Fittings and Equipment	CMWG is used to purchase HEPA air cleaner unit, additional furniture for outside, single desks etc.

Covid Minor Works Grant (CMWG) used for non-capital purchases		
Grant Income Code	Expenditure Code	Example
3277 – Covid Minor Works Grant (non-capital)	5316 – Covid Minor Works (non-capital) Expense	Rental of additional space/rooms

6. Queries

Queries in relation to minor works grant payments should be emailed to:
pbufinmgt@education.gov.ie

Queries in relation to ventilation should be emailed to:
Schools_Ventilation@education.gov.ie

Further information or clarification on any of the issues raised in this Guideline can be obtained from the FSSU.

Tel: 01-269 0677
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15th December 2021