

Financial Guideline P12 - 2021/2022

Enhanced Minor Works Grant Funding for Primary Schools with a particular focus on supporting enhanced ventilation (Circular 65/2021)

1. Introduction

The purpose of this guideline is to provide details of the Minor Works and the Enhanced Minor Works Grant Funding for 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" and the Department's document "Practical Steps for the Deployment of Good Ventilation Practices in Schools". Circular 0062/2013 "Grant Scheme for Minor Works to National School Properties" is available at <https://www.gov.ie/en/circular/ea522aad554f4e9f9fa8249076f0de93/>

2. Accessing Technical Advice on Ventilation

In supporting schools in undertaking ventilation improvements, good guidance is available at:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/ad236-guidance-on-ventilation-in-schools/>

regarding the following:

- 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 available at <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/ad236-guidance-on-ventilation-in-schools/#room-air-cleaners> 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.

The contact details are: Schools_Ventilation@education.gov.ie

3. Minor Works Grant Payment

The table below provides an illustrative example of the value of the Minor Works Grant for primary schools of various sizes.

TABLE 1 School Size (Enrolments)	€5,500 + €18.50 Mainstream + €74 SEN
60	€6,610
100	€7,350
200	€9,200
300	€11,050
400	€12,900
500	€14,750

Calculations in this table are based on the number of mainstream pupils only.

AND
Enhancements to Minor Works Grant at Primary Level

The table below provides an illustrative example of the value of the Enhancements to Minor Works Grant for primary schools of various sizes.

TABLE 2 School Size (Enrolments)	Enhanced Grant Amount (Half the value of the Standard MWG)
60	€3,305
100	€3,675
200	€4,600
300	€5,525
400	€6,450
500	€7,375

4. Administration

The grant will be paid directly into the school bank account. The payment will be made in two tranches: the standard MWG paid first (Table 1) and the Enhancements to MWG funding subsequently (Table 2). It is envisaged that all payments will be processed in December 2021.

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, which is available at <https://www.gov.ie/en/circular/97829-emergency-works-grant-scheme-migration-to-online-applications-and-minor-revisions-of-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 in school accounts

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

Minor Works Grant (MWG) used for capital purposes		
Grant Income Code	Expenditure Code	Example
3920 – DE Fixtures, Fittings & Equipment Grant Income	1420 – Capital: Fixtures, Fittings and Equipment	Replacement of windows, resurfacing school yard, buying furniture, replacement or improvement of mechanical or electrical services (see Circular 0062/2013).
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, partitions, 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.
Minor Works Grant (MWG) used for non-capital purchases		
Grant Income Code	Expenditure Code	Example
3275 – Minor Works Grant (non-capital)	5315 – Minor Works (non-capital) Expense	Painting and repairs 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

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

If you require any further information, please email primary@fssu.ie or phone (01) 910 4020

Financial Support Services Unit

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