



## Circular 0046/2025

**To: The Managerial Authorities, Principals of Recognised Post-Primary Schools and the Chief Executives of Education and Training Boards.**

### **Funding Scheme for secure mobile phone storage solutions**

#### **Introduction and Purpose**

A circular ([0045/2025](#)) has now issued to all recognised post-primary schools regarding the requirement to implement restrictions on the use of, and access to, personal mobile phones by students during the school day including during breaks.

To support schools to implement their approach, a funding allocation on a per capita basis is being made available on application to those schools that choose to provide an infrastructural solution, such as portable secure lockable pouches or phone storage boxes.

Schools must use this funding as provided for in this circular and must maintain any unused monies, ring-fenced within their accounts, to fund replacement and additional equipment required, including for incoming first years in subsequent years. It is only when any such funding has been fully expended for this purpose, that schools may apply to the Department for funding for replacement and additional equipment. Schools should contact the Digital Policy for Schools Section in this regard via email at [PhoneStorageFunding@education.gov.ie](mailto:PhoneStorageFunding@education.gov.ie), and must provide evidence that no funding from the original requested allocation is available, and that the funding provided was used as directed in this circular.

As any equipment purchased with this funding is the property of the school, it is expected that schools will maximise their investment in equipment through recycling same, so where there are school leavers, in particular outgoing sixth year students, the equipment must be redistributed including to incoming first year students.

Under this circular, schools that have already implemented such solutions may apply to replace equipment as necessary, up to a maximum of 20% of enrolment. Those schools may also apply for funding for the anticipated first year intake for September 2025.





Information on the background to this scheme, the rates, eligibility and criteria for this funding, is set out below. This payment will be issued to school bank accounts. **Schools are invited to apply for funding online at** <https://dessurveys.education.gov.ie/surveys/Application-for-Mobile-Phone-Funding>

Schools applying through the form by 24 June 2025, will receive funding before the end of June. Schools applying over the summer months and September will receive funding from October on. Schools applying thereafter will receive funding in December 2025.

The restriction on the use of mobile phones during the school day, is intended to address growing concerns including the potential for distraction during class time, the risk of accessing inappropriate content and cyberbullying, and the potential for decreased social interaction with peers.

Each school must have a mobile phone restriction policy, developed in consultation with the school community and agreed to by the board of management, available to students and parents. This policy must clearly outline the approach to be taken to implement the ban, including any exemptions that may apply, and how such exemptions will be determined.

Further information to assist schools to develop their approach can be found in the Circular for post-primary schools at: [0045/2025](#)

## **Funding**

- Funding must be used for the purchase of secure mobile phone storage solutions, including, but not limited to, secure portable mobile phone pouches, locked boxes and other suitable solutions.
- Schools in applying must indicate the number of students on their rolls for which funding for storage solutions will be required, through selecting the appropriate year groups.
- Schools that have already implemented such solutions will, in addition, indicate the number of students for which funding for replacements will be needed, up to a maximum of 20% of enrolment.
- Following processing of a valid application by schools, the Department will issue per capita funding to an applicant school, based on the information provided in the application.
- The per capita rate is €25 per student.
- The funding is aimed at post-primary schools in the Free Education Scheme. Applications from fee-charging schools will be considered on a case-by-case basis and must be accompanied by the rationale for applying for funding.





- Secure mobile phone storage solutions must be procured in accordance with public procurement requirements. To assist schools to procure an appropriate solution, obtaining value for money, ease of ordering and warranty and compliance with procurement regulations, work is in progress to establish a procurement mechanism for portable mobile phone storage pouches which will be announced by the department, but will not be in place until autumn 2025 at the earliest. Information for schools to access this mechanism will be available through the Schools Procurement Unit at [www.spu.ie](http://www.spu.ie).
- Records of expenditure and supporting documentation must be retained and be available for inspection. Schools will be provided with a template to provide information on expenditure of this funding.
- Schools must ensure compliance with Circular: 13/2014 Management of and Accountability for Grants from Exchequer Funds.

#### **Additional Information/Queries**

Detailed information is outlined in the Appendix attached to this Circular.

Queries in relation to the operation of this scheme should be addressed to [PhoneStorageFunding@education.gov.ie](mailto:PhoneStorageFunding@education.gov.ie).

Clare Connolly  
Principal Officer (Acting)  
Digital Policy for Schools  
June 2025





## **Appendix A:**

### **Funding Scheme for Secure Mobile Phone Storage Solutions**

#### **Grant Funding, Management and Compliance**

- 1) Grants under the scheme will be paid directly into the school bank account, based on the eligibility criteria outlined. Funding under this scheme is provided on application, and funding will issue to school bank accounts on processing of applications automatically, with a remittance advice slip to be provided to schools. Where there are issues with the application, schools will be contacted directly by the Department of Education to assist in progressing the application.

As with all Exchequer grant-aid, school authorities must be able to provide detailed records on how funding, provided under this scheme, was spent. All expenditure in connection with the scheme must be vouched and schools must be able to prove that expenditure was used on digital infrastructure allowed under the scheme. Invoices and receipts must be retained in the event of an audit inspection by the Department and/or the Comptroller and Auditor General.

It is necessary for schools to keep details of quotations received, invoices, receipts and any other relevant records in respect of all expenditure for a period of seven years. Schools, on request, must provide the Department with a written statement of the expenditure of the grant and any remaining balances and other relevant information. If a school closes permanently, any balance held in the account must be surrendered to the Department on the date that the school ceases operation. The Department reserves the right to withhold future payments to schools for non-compliance with any of the terms of this Scheme.

- 2) Schools must ensure compliance with Circular: 13/2014, Management of and Accountability for Grants from Exchequer Funds. Please refer to: [DPER-Circular-13-14-Guidance-Note-and-Reporting-Requirements-1.pdf](#).

#### **FSSU (non-ETB sectors)**

All recognised Primary, Voluntary Secondary, Community and Comprehensive schools are required to submit accounts to the Financial Support Services Unit (FSSU) annually. This satisfies the requirement under Section 18 of the Education Act 1998 for schools to make available their accounts for inspection by the Minister.





Schools may be subject to audit by the FSSU as part of its ongoing programme of work in supporting schools on financial governance matters and enabling them to comply with the provisions of the Education Act 1998 in terms of accountability, transparency and financial responsibility for State funds.

### **ETB Schools**

The Annual Financial Statements of the ETBs are audited by the C&AG and are laid before the Houses of the Oireachtas, while the Internal Audit Unit for the ETB sector provides assurance to the Audit Committee of the ETBs that the system of internal control as implemented by executive management is adequate and operates effectively.

### **Tender Procedures and Record keeping**

All purchases must be in compliance with Public Procurement Procedures. Schools should contact the Schools Procurement Unit for further information and support as required at [www.spu.ie](http://www.spu.ie). Care should be taken to ensure that identical technical specifications are presented to all vendors at the time of request for written quotations.

Schools should refer to the School Procurement Unit **Guidance for Schools on Good Procurement Practices** document available on the SPU website [www.spu.ie](http://www.spu.ie) and the Office of Government Procurement information at [www.ogp.gov.ie](http://www.ogp.gov.ie).

### **Role of Board of Management**

The Board of Management must establish a set of procedures governing purchasing and should set out the arrangements for tendering and buying of goods, payment of invoices and maintenance of accounting records. Further information can be found on the Schools Procurement website at [www.spu.ie](http://www.spu.ie)

### **Support and Information**

Schools may find the resources available from the following sources helpful.

[www.spu.ie](http://www.spu.ie)

[Webwise](#)

[Oide Technology in Education - Home](#)  
[0045/2025](#)

**End**