



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Óige
Department of
Education and Youth

Post-primary Schoolbooks Scheme

Guidance for Post-primary
Schools 2026/2027

Prepared by the Department of
Education and Youth
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Document control

Version Number	Details of change	Changed section
V1.0	Published	
V1.1	Updated date	3.2

Minister's Foreword

I am pleased as Minister for Education and Youth to continue the implementation of the post-primary schoolbooks scheme for the 2026/2027 school year. This will mean the provision of free schoolbooks and additional classroom resources for all students in post-primary schools in the Free Education Scheme.

I want to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to all school leaders, school staff and boards of management for the successful implementation of the scheme this past year.

Through the dedication of our whole school community, students were provided with schoolbooks and classroom resources for the 2025/2026 school year, and the scheme has reduced back-to-school costs for families.

Education is at the heart of all of our ambitions as a country. Excellent and innovative education is essential to delivering a fair society and a strong economy.

By providing children and young people with schoolbooks, we are enhancing their educational experience, not just in the classroom but at home and as they prepare for life after school. The Post-primary Schoolbooks Scheme will ensure that students are provided with essential materials and resources.

The scheme will benefit over 400,000 post-primary students across every county, with some 936,000 children and young people benefitting from free schoolbooks across Ireland.

This guidance has been revised to support post-primary schools to implement the scheme in advance of the 2026/2027 school year. It was written with the assistance and the experience of key stakeholders, including schoolbook publishers and schoolbook suppliers. Again, I would like to express my appreciation to all partners for their continued support.

The Programme for Government contains a commitment to provide free schoolbooks to all children in the free education system and introduce changes as needed to the operation of this scheme. I look forward to working with schools and other stakeholders in this regard.

Hildegarde Naughton TD

Minister for Education and Youth



1 Introduction

This guidance is to support post-primary school leaders in administering the Post-primary Schoolbooks Scheme. It should help to answer any questions about the scheme and support school planning for the 2026/2027 school year.

The cost of preparing children and young people for back to school each year can be a challenging and worrying time for many families who are under increased financial pressure to provide the range of items required for the return to school. One of the significant outlays is the cost of providing schoolbooks and related classroom resources. The Post-primary Schoolbooks Scheme was first introduced for the 2024/2025 school year for Junior Cycle students and is designed to remove the cost from families of funding schoolbooks and core classroom resources for children and young people in post-primary schools.

Parents/Guardians will no longer be required to make any contribution towards the cost of schoolbooks¹ and core classroom resources. Where the funding allows, additional classroom resources may also be provided by schools under the scheme.

The scheme will ensure equity of access, where all children and young people enrolled in post-primary schools in the Free Education Scheme can commence the 2026/27 school year with the same schoolbooks and core classroom resources as other young people in their class.

Key principles of the Post-primary Schoolbooks Scheme

- Schoolbooks and classroom resources will be chosen to support the implementation of the teaching and learning in the school and the provision of the post-primary curriculum to students.
- All children and young people enrolled in the school will have access to free schoolbooks, core classroom resources and, where surplus funding permits, related classroom resources.
- While schoolbooks remain the property of the school, the scheme will foster and encourage parental engagement with their child's learning when students bring their schoolbooks home.
- No costs for schoolbooks and core classroom resources will be sought from parents/guardians.
- Schools will retain the discretion to implement the curriculum by choosing schoolbooks and resources that best meet the needs of their students.

¹ where the word "schoolbooks" is used throughout this document it encompasses all relevant textbooks, including ebooks, and workbooks in use at school level to support teaching and subject learning at Junior Cycle, and Senior Cycle, including Transition Year. It also includes necessary additional texts such as novels and plays for English and where required books of past examination papers.

2 What is to be provided under the scheme

2.1 Key items to be provided

The Post-primary Schoolbooks Scheme provides funding for key items to support the delivery of teaching and learning in schools. **All schoolbooks remain the property of the school and are provided on loan to students either for the school year or for the cycle.** Schoolbooks must be collected at the end of the school year. Some classroom resources cannot be reused by other students in subsequent years. Resources such as calculators and dictionaries may remain with the student for the duration of the programme or their post-primary education.

Schools must provide all students enrolled in the school with:

- Schoolbooks/textbooks (including eBooks)
- Workbooks
- Novels/plays for Irish/English
- Books of past examination papers
- Core classroom resources (see Appendix 1 for full list of items to be provided)

Funding under this scheme does not cover costs associated with school trips or conferences (including but not limited to Young Scientist, Young Social Innovators, Student Enterprise Programme).

Schools are not obliged to provide a student with schoolbooks if the subject is not delivered by the school, where the student is studying the subject independently outside of school. Where a local arrangement exists between schools, to allow a student to study a subject in a different post-primary school to the school that they are enrolled in, the provision of the items to the student should be provided by the school the student is enrolled in.

It is important to ensure that students and their families are reminded of their crucial role in ensuring the sustainability of the scheme. Parents should realise that it is required that books are returned, in good condition, to the school in accordance with the school policy, at the end of the year. It is at the discretion of the school to replace any items lost or damaged and this should be considered as part of the schoolbooks policy in each school. Where a student enrolls in the school part-way through the school year or part-way through a programme, they must be provided with **all** items required to participate in learning in the school. Where a student leaves the school during the school year schoolbooks must be returned to the school.

2.2 Special classes in post-primary schools

The department recognises the specific and individual needs of children and young people enrolled in post-primary programmes in special schools and enrolled in special classes in post-primary schools.

Schools have the discretion under the schoolbooks scheme to use funding to purchase items over the duration of the school year that support the delivery of the curricula to these children and young people. This may include traditional schoolbooks. This can also include additional, and often bespoke, learning and classroom resources. The funding can also be used to produce teacher generated classroom resources.

Classroom resources for the purpose of special classes in post-primary schools can only include **any resource used to support the delivery of the curriculum that is relevant to the students individual Student Support Plans**. Teachers and other staff in special classes in post-primary schools are best placed to identify the classroom resources required. An item is not an eligible purchase if it is currently funded through existing funding streams, either from the Department of Education and Youth or from other departments and agencies (e.g. ICT grant, Assistive Technology Grant).

2.3 Schools that use teacher generated resources and content

Some post-primary schools have moved away from the use of schoolbooks including eBooks. These schools use teacher generated content and resources. Such schools may require a small number of schoolbooks each year such as English plays and novels.

If a teacher-generated content school has surplus funding after all other items are provided (including core classroom resources in Appendix 1), these schools may use the funding to facilitate a digital device loan scheme for students. Any digital devices provided remain the property of the school and must be collected from students at the end of the school year.

2.4 Surplus funding

After providing all mandatory items listed in Section 2.1, schools have a number of options.

Surplus funding can be:

- used to purchase additional classroom resources* subject to the following three criteria:
 - 1) the resource must be used for the purpose of the delivery of the relevant curricula.
 - 2) the resource must not be allowable under other funding streams.
 - 3) the cost of the resource would previously have been or ordinarily be provided by parents/guardians.
- used to purchase digital media support which relates to teaching and learning within curricular requirements.
- used to purchase literacy and numeracy resources for the school.
- allocated towards items where parents were previously charged e.g. art materials, photocopying.
- carried forward to the next school year.

Funding under this scheme cannot be used for purposes other than those outlined in this guidance.

*When deciding on what items to purchase, schools are requested to consider providing items across a range of different subjects.

An item is not an eligible purchase if it is currently funded through existing funding streams, either from the Department of Education and Youth or from other departments and agencies (e.g. ICT grant, Assistive Technology Grant).

It is important that schools communicate to parents what is covered under the scheme in their school and what items have to be purchased by parents.

3 How the scheme is implemented in schools

The board of management/ETB is responsible for administering the scheme in line with the key principles outlined on page 6. Schools have autonomy to choose schoolbooks and classroom resources that meet curricular requirements.

To support implementation of the schoolbooks scheme, schools may introduce a schoolbooks scheme policy. The school's policy on care for, and loss or damage of schoolbooks must be developed in consultation with parents and students. It can also be considered when developing the schools code of behaviour.

A school's policy on the selection of schoolbooks should include,

- Textbook/eBook usage guidelines
- How the items will be distributed
- Responsible usage of items
- Replacement of lost or damaged items

Schools are reminded of the importance of recycling and sustainability and are asked to consider this in their selection of workbooks, which are generally not reusable.

To ensure the sustainability of the schoolbooks scheme, post-primary schools can request a refundable deposit from parents. This deposit must be returned to parents when books are returned to the school in accordance with the school's policy on schoolbooks. The deposit **can be no more than €50 per student per year/cycle** and schools are also asked to take into account the number of students attending the school per family.

While schools can request a deposit from parents, schools must not stop provision of the items to any student for non-payment of this deposit or for non-payment of other school charges.

It can take time for orders to be fulfilled and delivered to schools. It is important that subject teachers decide as early as possible what items are required by students to allow sufficient time for procurement, ordering, and delivery. The board of management/ETB and school management need to ensure that all practical tasks relating to the administration of the Post-primary Schoolbooks Scheme are concluded in time for the beginning of the new school year. Some of these key tasks are outlined in **Appendix 3**.

3.1 Grant payment

The grant is paid to schools at a per capita rate. It is based on the enrolment numbers submitted by the school for **30 September 2025**.

It is important to note that schools have discretion to disburse funding across the respective programmes as required taking into account the specific needs of the school.

Funding will issue to schools in April 2026. For post-primary schools under the patronage of education and training boards (ETBs) book grants will issue directly to the relevant ETB. The ETB will distribute the funding to schools through standard grant funding procedures.

The per capita rates for 2026/27 are listed in the table below.

Programme	Per capita rate 2026/27 (€)
Junior Cycle (including JCSP)	309
Transition Year	142
Senior Cycle (including LCA1/2)	295

Table 1. Post-primary Schoolbooks Scheme per capita rates 2026/27.

Worked example of funding provided under the Junior Cycle Schoolbooks Scheme 2026/27	
On 30 September 2025 School A had the following enrolments:	
Junior Cycle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 112 students in first year, • 132 in second year and • 128 in third year 	Senior Cycle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 85 Transition Year students • 138 fifth/sixth year • 40 LCA1/2 students.
The total grant that will be paid to this school in spring 2026 for the 2026/27 school year in respect of these 635 students is €179,528.	

Table 2. Post-primary Schoolbooks Scheme funding allocation worked example.

3.2 Administration support grant

An administration support grant will be paid to schools for the 2026/2027 school year. This grant can be used to employ a person/s to work for a specified number of days to carry out administrative work on the scheme. This work is to be completed outside standard working hours. No substitution or supervision hours will be provided in lieu to cover absences.

Appendix 3 contains a list of some of the key tasks involved in the implementation of the scheme at school level. This is not an exhaustive list and will differ from school to school.

The administration support grant is based on the enrolment of the school on 30 September 2025. For developing schools, it will be calculated based on projected enrolment figures for September 2026.

Post-primary schools will receive a single payment that is made up of two key parts.

1. Core administrative days.
2. Supplementary support days

The **core administration support** is allocated to cover the main logistical work associated with the scheme. This includes time for training on procurement, and manual handling. The person/s paid for this work can be an existing member of staff of the school/ETB such as: the principal/deputy principal, a teacher, a special needs assistant (SNA), the school secretary, an ETB head office staff member or an individual deemed suitable by the school management to carry out this role effectively.

The specific duties are to be determined by the school management. These duties can include, managing the procurement under the scheme, placing orders with suppliers, checking delivery of orders from suppliers, covering schoolbooks, preparing and tracking sets of schoolbooks and classroom resources for individual classes/students, liaising with suppliers and subject teachers, ensuring appropriate financial records are maintained in relation to expenditure under the scheme.

The ETB sector has a centralised ETB procurement dynamic purchasing system (DPS) for the purchase of schoolbooks. Procurement is carried out centrally by each ETB. Therefore, as in 2025, ETB schools are not assigned additional administration support days for procurement work.

The daily rate sanctioned by the department for this work is €172.60 for 2026 which includes holiday pay. The department will provide an additional 11.40% to cover the employer PRSI cost. **The payment must be processed by the school as it would be the payment of any person carrying out work for, or in, the school.**

Although the rate is based on a daily rate, schools have the autonomy to use the equivalent hours over the course of the school year as they consider most suitable for their needs.

The **supplementary support** is allocated to help the core administrator with the main implementation of the scheme. This can include arranging packs of schoolbooks and resources for individual students and assisting with schoolbooks collection days.

The rate sanctioned by the department for this work is the current minimum wage. Schools will be allocated funding of €14.15 per hour. For the purposes of the supplementary support days grant calculation, a day is taken to mean 7 hours. The department will provide an additional 8% to cover holiday pay and an additional 11.40% to cover the employer PRSI cost.

The number of days allocated are based on the enrolment size on 30 September 2025.

Voluntary, Secondary, Community and Comprehensive Schools 2026/27			
Size of school (Student enrolment September 2025)	Core administration days	Supplementary support (students/ other individuals)	Total Days
0 – 300	18	10	28
301 – 600	21	15	36
601 – 1000	24	20	44
1001 – 1600	26	25	51

Table 3. Administration support grant allocations for Voluntary, Secondary and Community and Comprehensive schools for 2026/27.

Education and Training Board Schools 2026/27			
Size of school (Student enrolment September 2025)	Core administration days	Supplementary support (students/ other individuals)	Total Days
0 – 300	11	10	21
301 – 600	14	15	29
601 – 1000	17	20	37
1001 - 1600	19	25	44

Table 4. Administration support grant allocations for Education and Training Board schools for 2026/27.

The Administration Support Grant will be paid separately to the schoolbook grant and will issue to post-primary schools before the end of May.

3.3 Engaging with parents/guardians

One of the key principles of the scheme is to foster and encourage parental engagement with their child's learning. Students should be allowed to bring schoolbooks home in order to complete homework. This also allows parents/guardians to stay connected with their child's learning in school.

Post-primary schools must communicate with parents/guardians before the end of the 2025/2026 school year in relation to the Post-primary Schoolbooks Scheme for 2026/2027.

The communication to parents about the scheme should **only** include information on:

1. How the scheme is implemented in the school.
2. When items will be distributed to students.
3. A list of additional classroom resources/stationary **that are not provided** by the school under the scheme and the arrangements for the provision of these items.

This is to ensure all parents/guardians are fully aware of the scheme and parents/guardians do not incur any unnecessary expenditure before the start of the 2026/2027 school year.

A draft communication to parents/guardians is available at **Appendix 2**. The department has also produced an information leaflet for parents/guardians which is published at www.gov.ie/schoolbookschemes. This leaflet has been emailed to all post-primary schools. As part of the communication with parents', schools must circulate this information leaflet to all families with children entering or currently enrolled in the school.

3.4 Additional enrolments

3.4.1 Developing schools

For the purposes of the Post-primary Schoolbooks Scheme for 2026/2027 a developing school is a school that:

1. has **newly opened since September 2021**, and,
2. significantly increased their enrolment size.

An initial payment of the book grant will be made in April 2026 to all post-primary schools that have developing school status. This will be paid at the same time as all other schools receive payment, and this will be calculated based on September 2025 enrolment data. The

department will make contact directly with all developing schools to source projected September 2026 enrolment data.

A top up payment (based on the projected enrolments provided by the school) will then be made to these schools later in 2026. Where the validated September 2026 enrolments are less than the projected enrolments provided by the school, the school will be required to return the excess schoolbook grant to the department.

To Note – given that a manual top-up payment will be calculated for developing schools it will only be possible for schools to submit final projected September 2026 enrolments to the department once. Developing schools are requested to consider this before submitting the final projected enrolments for September 2026.

Worked example of additional funding provided to developing school under the Post-primary Schoolbooks Scheme 2026/27

For example, a school with developing school status has 350 students enrolled on 30 September 2025. The book grant will issue in February 2026 in respect of 350 students. The school projects September 2026 enrolments of 380 students. A top-up book grant will issue in respect of 30 students later in 2026.

Table 5. Worked example of developing school calculations for 2026/27.

3.4.2 Where a school enrolls additional students – exceptional circumstances payment

Schools will be expected, for the main part, to absorb the cost of additional enrolments that occur within the normal enrolment changes which take place throughout any given school year. Schools will not receive additional funding for any increase to enrolments which might be considered in the normal operation of the school. Schools that experience a decrease in enrolments since the previous September will not be asked to refund any excess grant funding (except for developing schools: see section 3.4.1). Funding will, as outlined above, balance and will be accounted for year on year.

However, where a school enrolls new students after 30 September 2025 and where funding was not originally allocated to take account of these students, the school may contact the department to make an application for additional funding. As a general rule, an additional payment will only be made by the department in situations.

1. where the number of new students enrolled after 30 September 2025 is equal to or **greater than 10%** of the 30 September 2025 enrolment figure **or greater than 15 students** and
2. where the school has **insufficient Schoolbooks Scheme funding** to meet the additional costs.

Schools that wish to apply for additional funding under “exceptional circumstances” should email postprimarieschoolbooks@education.gov.ie setting out the detail of the additional enrolments.

Schools will be required to provide evidence that all funds have been exhausted. Such applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

3.5 Annual review

Schools should review their implementation of the scheme, and any school policy developed in line with the scheme guidance, on an annual basis. This will help schools in preparation for the reporting of information which will be required by the department for governance and auditing purposes. This review can include:

- Reviewing how effectively the scheme has operated during the school year,
- Identifying possible improvements to the operation of the scheme,
- Assessing the quality of items and service from suppliers,
- Examining school policy on minimising the replacement of textbooks and workbooks,
- Considering measures to minimise future costs.

The view of school management, individual teachers, subject departments, parents and students are central to such a review. Feedback from this review can also be included on the school’s annual income and expenditure returns.

4 What are the legislative requirements schools must comply with

Schools have obligations in relation to procurement, copyright, and financial management that must be adhered to when implementing the Post-primary Schoolbooks Scheme. Additional information on these key areas is provided below.

4.1 Financial management

Proper financial management procedures must be applied to the funding provided to schools under the Post-primary Schoolbooks Scheme. The schoolbook funding is ring-fenced for schoolbooks, and classroom resources for students. Transactions in relation to the scheme should be identified as such in the schools' accounts as with standard financial management procedures (see FSSU website for guidance <https://www.fssu.ie/post-primary/>).

Surplus funding can be distributed in line with the guidance section 2.4. 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 the purchase of materials allowed under the scheme.

Invoices and receipts must be retained for the purposes of potential audit/inspection by the department, the Financial Support Services Unit (FSSU)/Internal Audit Unit-ETBs as appropriate and/or the Comptroller and Auditor General. It is necessary for schools to retain, booklists, and details of quotations received, invoices, receipts and any other relevant records in respect of all expenditure for a period of seven years.

Schools will be sent a link to an income and expenditure return to complete online. This will issue to schools in the 2026/2027 school year and will be like the income and expenditure report that issued in early 2026.

If a school closes permanently, any balance held by the school from this grant must be surrendered to the department on the date that the school ceases operation. Where a school closes permanently due to an amalgamation, any balance held in both schools from this grant shall transfer to the new school.

The department reserves the right to recoup funding issued from other grant funding for non-compliance with any of the terms of this scheme. Schools must ensure compliance with

DPER Circular 13/2014, Management of and Accountability for Grants from Exchequer Funds <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-public-expenditure-infrastructure-public-service-reform-and-digitalisation/circulars/circular-132014-management-of-and-accountability-for-grants-from-exchequer-funds/>.

4.1.1 Financial support services unit

In accordance with department Circular 0002/2018 Operation of the Financial Support Services Unit (FSSU), the Financial Support Services Unit (FSSU) provides advice and support to Voluntary Secondary schools and Community and Comprehensive schools in financial governance. This circular can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/circulars/operation-of-the-financial-support-services-unit-fssu/>.

This includes standardising arrangements for compliance with accounting requirements under Section 18 of the Education Act 1998 and enhancing current financial support structures for schools. The FSSU also supports boards of management in meeting their compliance requirements to other regulatory and statutory bodies. The FSSU has produced guidance to assist schools with their accounting requirements. It can be accessed on the FSSU website.

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.

Funding to ETB schools may be subject to audit by the Internal Audit Unit-ETBs.

4.1.2 Payments to suppliers

Schools should be mindful of the importance of **prompt payment of invoices** to suppliers in line with financial management guidance provided by the FSSU. Funding will issue to schools in April 2026 to ensure schools have the capacity to purchase schoolbooks and other items in advance of the start of the school year. Schoolbook suppliers may wish to charge a deposit to schools. This should be negotiated with potential suppliers during contract signing.

4.1.3 Department expenditure return

All post-primary schools **will be required to complete and submit** an income and expenditure report, each year, in respect of the scheme. The department will communicate further in the 2026/2027 school year with schools in relation to this income and expenditure report. Schools will be asked to provide details relating to the administration and financial costs of the scheme. Schools will also have the opportunity to provide feedback in the income and expenditure return and can also include feedback received by the school in any local school review of the scheme (see section 3.5).

All schools in the Free Education Scheme are required to co-operate with this process.

The ongoing evaluation of the scheme may involve selecting a sample of schools to participate in further evaluation work.

Schools selected for any future evaluation will be informed in advance and will be required to co-operate with the process. The evaluation will aim to, among other things:

- review the operation of the scheme, including compliance with relevant legislation, Circulars and the scheme guidance.
- identify possible improvements to the operation of the scheme.
- review expenditure under the scheme.
- consider measures to improve efficiency for future years.
- assess the wider impacts of the scheme in relation to (1) reducing the cost of education to households (2) removing barriers to education for some students (3) promoting value for money (4) promoting environmental and cost efficiency through the reuse of books.

The views of school management, teachers, parents/guardians and students, schoolbook publishers, schoolbook suppliers and other relevant stakeholders will be considered in the development of any evaluation.

It is essential that schools/ETBs retain all documentation pertaining to the scheme including, proof of compliance with EU and national procurement rules, and details of all items purchased under the scheme, to ensure valid information is provided to the evaluation process.

4.2 Procurement

Schools have obligations that stem from both EU and national public procurement rules when sourcing goods and services.

Schools have access to the Public Procurement Guidelines for Goods and Services published by the Office of Government Procurement (OGP). These Guidelines promote good practice and consistency of application of the public procurement rules in relation to the purchase of goods and services. The guidelines are available at <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/c23f5-public-procurement-guidelines-for-goods-and-services/>.

The Office of Government Procurement also aims to promote schemes to facilitate Small and Medium sized Enterprise (SME) participation in Public Procurement. DPER Circular 05/2023 refers to initiatives to assist SMEs in Public Procurement and outlines the schemes which schools may consider as part of their procurement process. It can be accessed here <https://www.gov.ie/en/circular/9e7bf-circular-05-2023-initiatives-to-assist-smes-in-public-procurement/>.

Schools can use the Office of Government Procurement Office Supplies Framework for stationery requirements (<https://buyerzone.gov.ie/> or contact the helpdesk at support@ogp.gov.ie). Some items which may be required by schools under this scheme are listed on the framework and schools are encouraged to engage the services of the Office Supplies Framework which aims to achieve value for money on the items included on the framework.

The Schools Procurement Unit (SPU) is the central support resource for providing guidance to all recognised primary schools, including special schools, and post-primary schools (except ETB schools) on any procurement-related issue. ETB schools are supported in their procurement activity by their local ETB. The SPU delivers free advice and practical support to schools to help them achieve improvements in their procurement processes, practices and outcomes.

The SPU has a dedicated webpage containing procurement support for the Schoolbooks Scheme, see <https://www.spu.ie/schoolbooks-scheme/>.

4.2.1 Dynamic purchasing system (DPS)

The department, the Education Procurement Service (EPS) and the Schools Procurement Unit (SPU) launched a dynamic purchasing system in 2025 to support post-primary schools in meeting their public procurement obligations. A DPS is an electronic system that is used to procure goods that has pre-approved suppliers who meet minimum standards and legal requirements. The ETB sector will from 2026 have a separate centralised ETB procurement dynamic purchasing system (DPS) for the purchase of schoolbooks. Procurement is carried out centrally by each ETB.

It is important to note, all Voluntary, Secondary and Community and Comprehensive schools that have a total schoolbook contract more than €50,000 (excluding VAT) are required to procure schoolbooks through the DPS. Where the total contract value is less than €50,000 (excluding VAT) schools are encouraged to use the DPS.

4.2.2 Green public procurement

The public sector has a vital role to play in leading Ireland's transition to a sustainable and carbon-neutral economy and society. Public procurement is one of the primary ways in which public bodies will help to shape this transition, and to meet the 2030 targets for reducing CO₂ emissions and improving energy efficiency.

The Green Public Procurement Guidance for the Public Sector provides step-by-step instructions and criteria for implementing green public procurement (GPP), in line with Irish and EU policy and legislation. All tenders using public funds must include green public procurement (GPP). For those schools using the DPS to source schoolbooks, the criteria on which contracts are awarded will have been predetermined and will have taken GPP into account.

Updated 2024 guidance is available at; <https://www.epa.ie/publications/circular-economy/resources/epa-gpp-guidance-for-the-public-sector-2024.php>, and updated Green Public Procurement Instructions for Public Sector bodies was published in 2025 in DPEIPD Circular 17/2025 (<https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-public-expenditure-infrastructure-public-service-reform-and-digitalisation/circulars/circular-172025-updated-green-public-procurement-instructions-for-public-sector-bodies/>)

A green criteria search tool developed by the OGP and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is also available which allows users to search for specific green criteria in relation to a particular item which they are buying. One of the main subcategories that schools review is

the “Paper products and printing services” green criteria. The tool can be accessed here: <https://gppcriteria.gov.ie/>.

4.3 Copyright

In Ireland, books, magazines, journals, digital publications and websites are protected by Irish copyright law, and that law applies to everyone. Therefore, when a teacher wants to provide copies of content from a website or a book or magazine for their students, they need permission to do so.

It is mandatory for any educational establishment wishing to make multiple copies of a variety of copyright-protected works to have a licence.

As of September 2022, the Department of Education and Youth holds a central Educational Licence on behalf of all primary and post-primary schools recognised in the Free Education Scheme. This allows schools to re-use content in lessons without having to clear permissions to do so.

Further detail of what schools are permitted to use under the schools license is provided at the following link <https://www.icla.ie/licences/primary-and-post-primary-schools-licences>.

4.4 Non-compliance with the scheme

The department reserves the right to withhold future payments to schools for non-compliance with any of the terms of the scheme.

5 Additional information that will support successful implementation of the scheme

5.1 Resources that support the teaching of Irish and teaching through Irish

An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG), in collaboration with various educational publishers provides Irish-language versions of many textbooks (hard copies and digital versions).

In addition, COGG compiles a comprehensive 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 post-primary schools. This list is published at <https://cogg.ie/eolaire-acmhainni/>.

COGG's An Tairseach (or online resource portal) has been developed using digital resources from practicing teachers and will feature newly developed resources on an ongoing basis. Users can create an account and gain access to 1,600 resources across many subjects by logging on to <https://tairseachcogg.ie/>.

COGG also regularly organises information webinars, workshops and exhibitions 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.

More information on the above can be found at: www.cogg.ie.

5.2 Provision of digital items/resources

Decisions regarding the use of digital technology, such as eBooks/eTextbooks, in schools is a matter for the board of management/ETB of each school. In the case of post-primary schools using teacher-generated resources and content in place of schoolbooks, those schools may implement a scheme to provide digital devices on loan to students (see Section 2.3)

Schools can use the funding for digital media support which relates to teaching and learning within the curriculum. Schools can access digital resources and advice on the use of digital media and related professional learning at: www.scoilnet.ie/go-to-post-primary; www.oide.ie and www.webwise.ie.

5.2.1 Where a school is planning to introduce digital technologies

Schools are advised to consult with members of the school community, including parents/guardians, when planning for the introduction of digital technologies, with cost and other implications being fully considered by school management. The Government is progressing the Education (Student and Parent Charter) Bill. The overall aim of the Bill is to improve the level of engagement in the school community by inviting feedback, comment and observation from the school community and by further developing a listening culture in schools. One of the key concepts of the Bill is the need for a school to consult with students and their parents on individual school plans, policies and activities. This approach will help ensure that the various views of students and parents on issues and policies will be heard and responded to by schools.

5.3 Reducing waste

Schools should make an effort to reduce wastage under the scheme. Schools are expected to adopt a cost-conscious and an environment-conscious approach to the selection of schoolbooks and related classroom resources.

There are many ways in which schools can achieve this. When purchasing classroom resources, schools should consider what resources students already have in their possession.

Schools continue to have the autonomy under this scheme when selecting textbooks, and/or resources to deliver the various subjects in the curriculum. Schools should consider the lifespan of books and other resources and examine ways to reduce the use of single use items, such as workbooks.

It is strongly recommended that a cover is placed on all schoolbooks. Schoolbook suppliers may provide a book-covering service at a cost, or a school may decide to provide its own book-covering service or consider requesting parents/guardians to assist with this task. Schools must ensure that the cost of the minimum items required for all students is budgeted for before allocating grant funding to the cost of covering, barcoding or labelling schoolbooks. Parents should take responsibility for ensuring schoolbooks have a durable cover throughout the term of use by the student.

Parents/Guardians should be reminded that schoolbooks are the property of the school and students are expected to take good care of their schoolbooks and keep them in good condition during the year. This may be included as part of the Code of Behaviour.

Schools are expected to collect schoolbooks at the end of the school year or cycle, for re-use in future school years.

5.4 Early planning

It is important that subject teachers decide as early as possible what schoolbooks and classroom resources are required for their subjects to allow sufficient time for public procurement and delivery. The board of management/ETB and school management should ensure that all practical tasks relating to the administration of the Post-primary Schoolbooks Scheme are concluded in time for the beginning of the new school year. Some of these key tasks involved are outlined in Appendix 3.

5.5 Annual booklists

Annual booklists should continue to be compiled by post-primary schools arising from the decisions of teachers and school management based on the requirements of the school. These should be maintained for audit purposes.

Annual booklists should be made available to schoolbook publishers. This is important to aid publishers in their yearly planning process, including estimating demand for certain publications and ensuring sufficient quantities of schoolbooks are printed. This will ensure publishers have sufficient stock on hand to fulfil orders received from schoolbook suppliers and it will help minimise delays in delivering items to schools. Maintaining annual booklists will also ensure that any associated teacher resource materials and appropriate licences are provided by publishers to the school. Schools should note that schoolbook publishers will require proof of purchase to provide teacher resources that accompany schoolbooks. Any cost associated with acquiring a teacher resource, where a school does not need to purchase the accompanying schoolbook, is a matter for schoolbook publishers. Schools will need to consider this and clarify with respective suppliers when budgeting and ordering each year.

Teacher resources are not considered an eligible purchase under the Post-primary Schoolbooks Scheme.

5.6 Template for quotations where the total contract is under €50,000 (exclusive of VAT)

IMPORTANT NOTE: Contracts under €50,000 (exclusive of VAT) may be awarded on the basis of written quotations from three suppliers.

Where the total value of a contract is less than €50,000 (ex VAT), the use of a standard template by schools will assist to streamline the process whereby schools obtain three quotations. The template is available at the following link: <https://www.spu.ie/schoolbooks-scheme/>. While schools are not obliged to use this template, it is considered beneficial to both schools and suppliers to increase efficiency in the procurement process where the total value of the contract is less than €50,000 (ex VAT).

5.7 Engaging with suppliers

To ensure a smooth implementation of the scheme, schools are requested to continue to finalise their booklists, quotation requests and other requirements for the 2026/27 school year as early as possible to ensure that schoolbooks and core classroom resources are delivered to schools and provided to students in advance of the school year.

It is planned that funding will issue to schools in April 2026 to facilitate prompt payment to schoolbook suppliers. Schoolbook suppliers may charge a deposit to schools. This is at the discretion of the supplier and should form part of any contract agreement between a school and a supplier.

It is accepted that there are certain circumstances where some schools may need to place orders after the start of the new school year, for example, where there is a requirement to purchase additional books or resources or for children with a special educational need to give teachers an opportunity at the start of the school year to decide what textbooks and resources are required.

Schools are encouraged to pay suppliers for all items purchased under this scheme as early as possible following delivery and checking of the items.

5.8 Irish Education Publishers Association (IEPA) Code of practice

The main Irish educational publishers have agreed to apply a code of practice designed to help reduce the cost of schoolbooks for parents/guardians and schools. As part of this code, publishers have given commitments to maintain new editions of schoolbooks in print for a minimum of six years, to co-operate with individual schools in the development of schoolbook schemes and to have improved engagement with school communities, parents/guardians, teachers, and other stakeholders. See Appendix 5.

5.9 Queries

All queries on this guidance or in relation to the Post-primary Schoolbooks Scheme should be sent to postprimarieschoolbooks@education.gov.ie.

The department has produced a Quick Reference Guide for schools to assist with general queries on the scheme. It can be accessed at: www.gov.ie/schoolbookschemes.

6 Appendices

6.1 Appendix 1 – Core classroom resources

The following lists of resources are items which **must** be provided by schools. The items are listed under the various programmes. The department acknowledges that subject choices and combinations can vary in schools. Schools have the discretion to provide additional items or substitute items on the list below to meet their own curricular needs. However, parents must not be asked to purchase any of these items if they are used in the school even if a school chooses to substitute an item for another item not on the list.

Some Senior Cycle students may already have some items from Junior Cycle that can be reused again in Senior Cycle. It is up to schools to determine the requirements of students. Where a school uses any of the items listed below, they must be provided by the school from within the grant funding. The school is under no obligation to replace a core classroom resource that has been lost or damaged by a student.

Junior Cycle items (per student per year unless stated otherwise)	Number of items
School journal	1
Copybooks (or equivalent hard back notebooks or refill pads)	12
A4 plastic display folder	1
A4 plastic zip folder/carry case	1
Set of ledgers/journals/cashbooks required for business studies	1 set of 3
Science copybook	1
Music copybook or manuscript book	1
Grammar books	1 per cycle
Mathematics Formulae and Tables/Log book	1 per cycle
Mathematical geometry set	1 per cycle
Scientific calculator	1 per cycle
Dictionary/Dictionaries to cover all language subjects studied	1 per cycle

Transition Year (per student per year unless stated otherwise)	Number of items
School journal	1
Copybooks (or equivalent hard back notebooks or refill pads)	4
A4 plastic display folder	1
A4 plastic zip folder/carry case	1

Senior Cycle items (per student per year unless stated otherwise)	Number of items
School journal	1
Copybooks (or equivalent hard back notebooks or refill pads)	16 (2 per examination subject)
A4 plastic display folder/ Ring binder folder with pockets	1
A4 plastic zip folder/carry case	1
Set of ledgers/journals/cashbooks required for accounting/business studies/economics	1 set of 3
Science copybook for science and applied science subjects	1
Music copybook or manuscript book	1
Grammar books (to cover all language subjects studied)	1 per cycle
Mathematics Formulae and Tables/Logbook	1 per cycle
Mathematical geometry set	1 per cycle
Scientific calculator	1 per cycle
Dictionary/Dictionaries (to cover all language subjects studied)	1 per cycle

6.2 Appendix 2 – Template letter to parents about the scheme

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Re: Post-primary Schoolbooks Scheme for 2026/2027 school year.

For the 2026/27 school year all students in post-primary schools in the Free Education Scheme will receive free schoolbooks and core classroom resources. These will be in place in time for the start of the new school year.

This scheme is being implemented by Minister for Education and Youth, Hildegard Naughton TD.

Funding for the scheme in 2026/2027 is being provided directly to post-primary schools by the Department of Education and Youth. Schools now have responsibility for providing schoolbooks, and core classroom resources, to all students at the start of the 2026/2027 school year.

All schoolbooks will remain the property of the school so that they can be reused in future years. Schoolbooks will be provided on loan to children and young people for the duration of the school year/cycle and must be returned to school at the end of the school year/cycle.

Parents/Guardians are requested to remind their child/children to take care of their schoolbooks and keep them in good condition during the year.

*For the 2026/2027 school year all related classroom resources will also be provided by the school and parents/guardians are not asked to purchase any items or pay a fee towards these items.

*For the 2026/2027 school year parents/guardians will be required to purchase certain additional classroom resources/*pay a fee of (insert amount) towards the purchase of additional classroom resources. Please find attached a list of items which you are required to purchase before the start of the school year/*please find attached a list of items which will be provided to your child at a fee of xx.

*Delete as appropriate

Yours sincerely

Chair of BoM

6.3 Appendix 3 – School task list

Key task check list	
	Arrange to collect schoolbooks from students at the end of the 2025/2026 school year
	Complete an audit of the current stock of schoolbooks and items that can be reused
	Compile booklist received from each subject department/class teacher and related classroom resources required for each class
	Complete subject option choice process to establish quantities of books required
	Establish, and list, the total number of schoolbooks and core classroom resources that need to be purchased
	Establish budget breakdown for schoolbooks, core classroom resources and additional classroom resources
	Determine what additional classroom resources can be covered by the funding
	Where expenditure for schoolbooks is less than €50,000 (ex VAT) source three quotes from suppliers ²
	Where expenditure for classroom resources is less than €50,000 (ex VAT) source three quotes from suppliers ³
	Where expenditure for schoolbooks is greater than €50,000 (ex VAT) generate a mini-competition for supply of schoolbooks on the schoolbooks DPS ⁴
	Decide on a supplier(s) for schoolbooks and classroom resources and place order/s
	Provide schoolbook publishers with booklists to satisfy requirements for digital supports such as proof of purchase of schoolbooks to obtain eBook licences or teacher resources
	Ensure all the necessary teaching resources/copyrights are provided by the relevant publishers
	Liaise with 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 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
	Sort schoolbooks and related classroom resources by class grouping and within classes
	Maintain financial records and retain quotations, tender documents and proof of purchase of materials funded by the scheme
	Organise schoolbook collection days
	Communicate with parents/guardians in relation to Post-primary Schoolbooks Scheme
	As required during the year, order additional stock

² Schools with expenditure less than €50,000 (ex VAT) are encouraged to use the DPS to source items.

³ If classroom resources expenditure exceeds €50,000 (ex VAT) contact the schoolbooks team in the department

⁴ Detailed guidance on the use of the DPS is available on the School's Procurement Unit website at www.spu.ie

6.4 Appendix 4 – OGP stationary framework and procurement thresholds

How to use the OGP Stationery Framework



The table overleaf sets out the procurement requirements when not using the OGP Stationery Framework.

Schoolbooks and Classroom Resources – Expenditure Threshold Guide (excluding VAT)

Below €5,000	€5,000 to €50,000	€50,000 to EU Threshold (€220,999)	Greater than €221,000
Can be awarded on the basis of verbal or written quotes from one or more competitive supplier.	Minimum of 3 Quotes (or DPS)	For schoolbooks - Dynamic Purchasing System DPS will also be used for schoolbook contracts that exceed the EU Threshold €220,999 For Classroom Resources Contracts that are estimated to exceed €50,000 contact the Schools Procurement Unit for support	Dynamic Purchasing System
Email request or RFQ Template	RFQ Template from SPU	Bespoke Support around the DPS will continue to be provided by the department and SPU to voluntary secondary and community and comprehensive school in 2026	
Quote submitted in writing or email	Submission response by email		
1 – 2 weeks to respond	14 days		
Lowest Price	Most economically advantageous tender (MEAT)		
Select Lowest Price	Evaluate offers against spec, qualification, and award criteria		
Email results	Email results with reasons Publish contract award notice on eTenders for contracts above €25,000		

6.5 Appendix 5 – IEPA Code of practice

IEPA CODE OF PRACTICE – Revised May 2022

Members of the Irish Educational Publishers' Association subscribe to the following Code of Practice which is designed to help reduce the cost of schoolbooks and improve the education experience for parents and schools.

- Publishers will not revise any text within at least four years – unless there is a change in the curriculum, the state examination or methods of assessment, or there is recognised teacher-led demand to do so.
- When a revised edition of a textbook is produced, the old edition will be kept in print for a two-year period, unless annual sales fall below 500 copies. This means that a new edition of a textbook will be available for a minimum of six years.
- Members of the IEPA will co-operate with the Department of Education and Youth and the various charitable organisations in the development of initiatives to improve access to educational materials for disadvantaged children both in Ireland and overseas.
- Apart from the commitment to maintain editions in print for a minimum of six years, the publishers will co-operate with individual schools in their development of textbook rental schemes.
- Member publishers will continue to engage actively with school communities, parents, teachers and government agencies to improve the education experience for students in Irish schools.

Adopted in October 2011 and revised in June 2015, this Code of Practice is supported by the following publishers: CJ Fallon, Educate.ie, Folens, Gill Education, An Gúm, Mentor Books, Prim-ed, The Educational Company and Veritas.

7 Useful links

www.gov.ie/schoolbookschemes

[Gov.ie - Public procurement guidelines for goods and services \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie)

[Guidance for Schools on Good Procurement Practices - SPU](#)

[Green Public Procurement \(epa.ie\)](http://epa.ie)

[COGG | An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta](#)

www.scoilnet.ie/go-to-post-primary

www.oide.ie

www.webwise.ie

<https://buyerzone.gov.ie/>

www.spu.ie

[DPER Circular 05/2023 - Initiatives to assist SMEs in Public Procurement](#)

[DPER Circular 13/2014 - Management of Grants from Exchequer Funds](#)

[DE Circular 0002/2018 Operation of the Financial Support Services Unit \(FSSU\)](#)

<https://www.fssu.ie/post-primary/>

<https://www.icla.ie/licences/primary-and-post-primary-schools-licences>

[Irish Educational Publishers Association/code-of-practice](#)

