



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Óige
Department of
Education and Youth

Primary Schoolbooks Scheme

Guidance for Primary and
Special Schools 2026/2027

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Minister's Foreword

I am pleased as Minister for Education and Youth to continue the implementation of the primary schoolbooks scheme for the 2026/2027 school year. This will mean the provision of free schoolbooks, workbooks and copybooks for all pupils in primary and special 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, pupils were provided with schoolbooks, workbooks and copybooks for the third successive year, and the scheme has reduced back-to-school costs for families.

Education is at the heart of all 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 primary schoolbooks scheme will ensure that pupils are provided with essential materials and resources. The scheme will benefit approximately 536,000 primary and special school pupils across every county, with some 936,000 children and young people benefitting from free schoolbooks across Ireland.

This guidance has been revised to support primary and special 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 schools, 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 primary and special school leaders in administering the 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 Primary Schoolbooks Scheme was first introduced for the 2023/2024 school year and is designed to remove the cost from families of funding schoolbooks for children and young people enrolled in primary and special schools.

Parents/Guardians will no longer be required to make any contribution towards the cost of schoolbooks, including the cost of any workbooks and copybooks. Where the funding allows, related 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 primary and special schools in the Free Education Scheme can commence the 2026/27 school year with the same schoolbooks and core classroom resources as other children and young people in their class.

Key principles of the Primary Schoolbooks Scheme

- Schoolbooks workbooks, and copybooks will be chosen to support the implementation of the teaching and learning in the school and the provision of the curriculum to children and young people.
- All children and young people enrolled in the school will have access to free schoolbooks, workbooks and copybooks, 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 pupils bring their schoolbooks home.
- No costs for schoolbooks, workbooks and copybooks 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 students.

2 What is provided under the scheme

2.1 Key items to be provided

The 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 pupils for the school year.** Reusable items must be collected at the end of the school year.

Schools must provide all pupils enrolled in the school with all required:

- Schoolbooks
- Workbooks, and
- Copybooks

Parents must not be charged any type of deposit to participate in the scheme.

It is important to ensure that pupils and their families are reminded of their crucial role in ensuring the sustainability of the scheme - parents should realise that it is a requirement of the scheme that books are returned, in good condition, to the school in accordance with the school policy, at the end of the school year.

Where a child leaves the school during the school year, schoolbooks must be returned to the school.¹ Where a pupil enrolls in the school partway through the school year or partway through a programme, they must be provided with all items required to participate in learning in the school.

2.2 Special schools and special classes in mainstream primary schools

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

¹ An exception to this is permitted where the pupil concerned has a special educational need and where the mandatory return of items provided under the scheme would cause undue distress to the pupil concerned.

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 schools and special classes in primary schools can only include **any resource used to support the delivery of the curriculum that is relevant to the pupils individual Student Support Plans**. Teachers and other staff in special schools and in special classes in mainstream 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 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.

*Additional classroom resources can include items such as stationary, dictionaries, school journals, mathematical sets, calculators and Atlas', providing a library of books, audiobooks and other material to increase literacy and numeracy.

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 is the scheme implemented

The board of management/ETB are responsible for administering the scheme in line with the key principles outlined on page 5. Schools have autonomy to choose schoolbooks and related classroom resources that meet curricular requirements.

To support the 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. 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.

It can take time for orders to be fulfilled and delivered to schools. It is important that class teachers decide as early as possible what items are required by pupils to allow sufficient time for ordering and delivery. The board of management/ETB and school management need to ensure that all practical tasks relating to the administration of the 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 2**.

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**.

Funding will issue to schools in May 2026. For 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 those schools under its remit through standard grant funding procedures.

Programme	Per capita rate 2026/27 (€)
Primary	80
Junior Cycle (including JCSP)	309
Transition Year	142
Senior Cycle (including LCA1/2)	295

Table 1. Primary Schoolbooks Scheme per capita rates 2026/27.

Important note for special schools

Children and young people enrolled in post-primary programmes in special schools will be allocated funding at the relevant post-primary rate. Special schools must ensure that the breakdown of enrolments across primary and post-primary programmes is accurately recorded on the Primary Online Database (POD) before grant funding issues each year. Grant funding can only issue based on enrolment data on record.

Worked example of funding provided under the Primary Schoolbooks Scheme 2026/27

On 30 September 2025 School A has 240 pupils enrolled.

The total grant that will be paid to this school in May 2026 for the 2026/27 school year in respect of these 240 students is €19,200.

Table 2. 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 2 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. For the 2026/2027 school year all special schools will receive an allocation of 7 days.

Primary schools will receive a single payment that is made up of an allocated number of days. 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. They can include seeking three quotations from schoolbook suppliers, placing orders with schoolbook suppliers, checking delivery of orders from suppliers, covering schoolbooks, preparing and tracking sets of schoolbooks and classroom resources for individual classes/pupils, liaising with suppliers and classroom teachers.

The daily rate sanctioned by the department for this work in 2026 is €172.60 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 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 number of days allocated are based on the enrolment size of the school and are as follows.

Primary school Administration Support Grant 2026/27

Size of School (enrolment September 2025)	Total days
0-100	3
101-300	4
301-599	6
>600 and all special schools	7

Table 3. Administration support grant allocations for primary and special schools for 2026/27.

The Administration Support Grant will be paid separately to the schoolbook grant and will issue to primary schools before the end of June 2026.

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. Pupils 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.

Primary and special schools must communicate with parents/guardians before the end of the 2025/2026 school year in relation to the 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 pupils.
3. A list of additional classroom resources/stationary that parents must buy/pay a charge for 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 1**. 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 primary and special 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 Primary Schoolbooks Scheme for 2026/2027 a developing school is a school that:

1. has **newly opened since September 2019**, and;
2. that has significantly increased their enrolment size.

An initial payment of the book grant will be made in May 2026 to all 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 30 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 Primary Schoolbooks Scheme 2026/27

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

Table 4. Worked example of developing school calculations for 2026/27.

3.4.2 Where a school enrolls additional pupils – 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 pupils after 30 September 2025, and where funding was not originally allocated to take account of these pupils, 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 pupils enrolled after 30 September 2025 is equal to or **greater than 10%** of the 30 September 2025 enrolment figure **or greater than 15 pupils**, 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 primaryschoolbooks@education.gov.ie setting out the detail of the additional enrolments.

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 may 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, parents and pupils 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 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 Primary Schoolbooks Scheme. The schoolbook funding is ring-fenced for schoolbooks, workbooks, copybooks and additional classroom resources. 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/primary/>).

Surplus funding can be distributed in line with the guidance section 2.3. 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 provided with an income and expenditure return to complete online. This will issue to schools in the 2026/2027 school year and will be similar to 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 by 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 60/2017 Roll out and operation of the Financial Support Services Unit (FSSU) at Primary Level, the Financial Support Services Unit (FSSU) provides advice and support to Primary and Special schools in financial governance. This circular can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/circular/61f0c1b613f241329c11673e95ee681a/>.

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 May 2026 to ensure schools have the capacity to purchase schoolbooks and other items in advance of the start of the 2026/2027 school year. Schoolbook suppliers may wish to charge a deposit to schools.

4.1.3 Department expenditure return

All primary and special 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 they have received 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 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).

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 pupils, 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 to support successful scheme implementation

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 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. 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.

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: <https://www.scoilnet.ie/go-to-primary/>; www.oide.ie and www.webwise.ie.

5.3 Reducing waste

Schools should make every 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, workbooks, copybooks and related classroom resources.

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

Schools continue to have the autonomy under this scheme when selecting textbooks, and other 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 pupils 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 pupil.

Parents/Guardians should be reminded that schoolbooks are the property of the school and pupils 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 class teachers decide as early as possible what schoolbooks, workbooks and copybooks 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 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 2**.

5.5 Annual booklists

Annual booklists should continue to be compiled by primary and special 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 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 pupils in advance of the new school year.

It is planned that funding will issue to schools in May 2026 to facilitate prompt payment to schoolbook suppliers. Schoolbook suppliers may charge a deposit to schools. This is at the discretion of the bookshop/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 4**.

5.9 Queries

All queries on this guidance or in relation to the primary schoolbook scheme should be sent to primaryschoolbooks@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 – Template letter to parents about the scheme

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Re: Primary Schoolbooks Scheme for the 2026/2027 school year.

For the 2026/2027 school year all pupils/students in primary and special schools in the Free Education Scheme will receive free schoolbooks, workbooks and copybooks. 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 Hildegarde Naughton TD.

Funding for the scheme in 2026/2027 is being provided directly to primary schools by the Department of Education and Youth. Schools now have responsibility for providing schoolbooks, workbooks and copybooks, to all pupils 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 and must be returned to school at the end of the school year.

Parents/Guardians are requested to remind their child/children to take care of their schoolbooks and keep them in good condition during the year. It is not permitted to write on schoolbooks.

*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) to the school 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

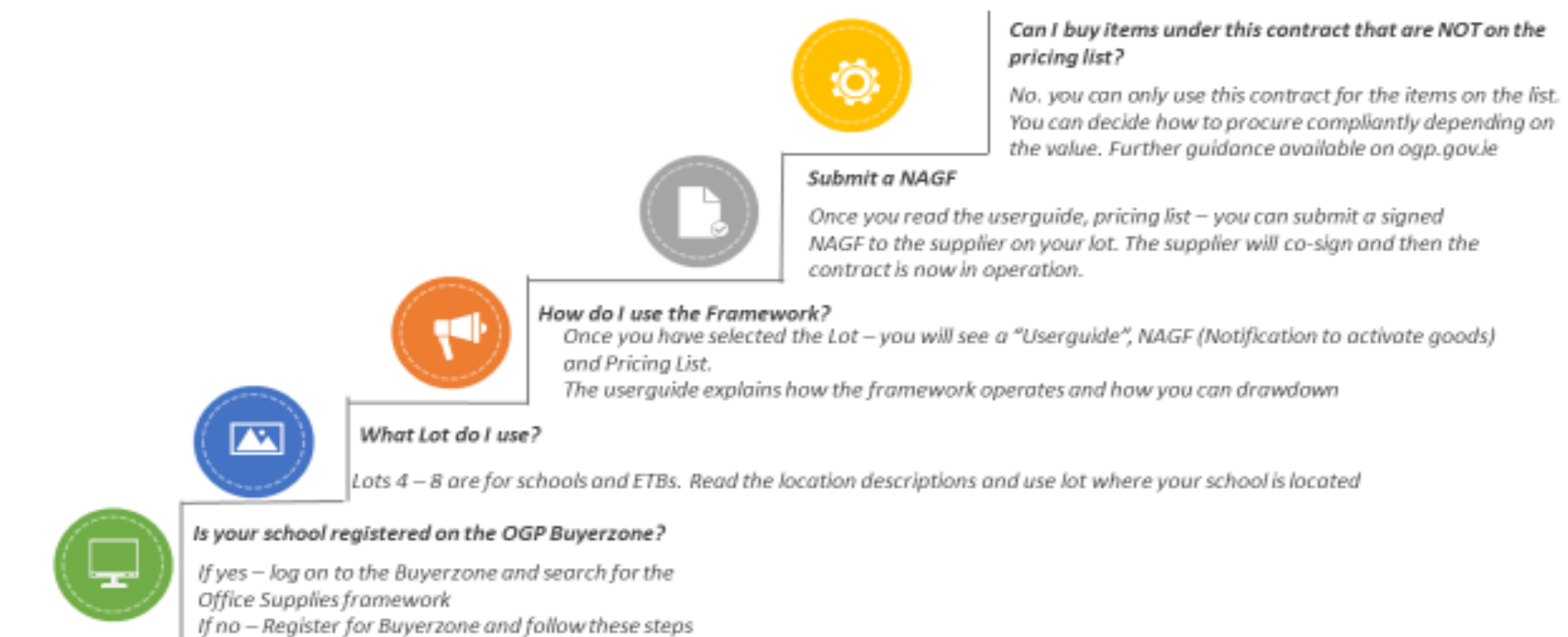
Chair of BoM

6.2 Appendix 2 – School task list

Task check list	
	Complete an audit of the current stock of books, workbooks, copybooks and or classroom resources that can be reused
	Compile booklist 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 for schoolbooks, workbooks and copybooks
	Determine what related classroom resources will be covered by the grant
	Where expenditure for schoolbooks is less than 50,000 (ex VAT) source three quotes from suppliers
	Where expenditure for schoolbooks is greater than 50,000 (ex VAT) create a competition using the eTenders OGP procurement platform see Schools Procurement Unit SPU Ireland
	Decide on a supplier(s) for schoolbooks, workbooks, copybooks and any related classroom resources being provided and place order/s
	Provide schoolbook publishers with class 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 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
	Sort schoolbooks workbooks and copybooks by class grouping and within classes as appropriate
	Maintain financial records and retain quotations, tender documents and proof of purchase of materials funded by the scheme
	Communicate with parents/guardians in relation to Primary Schoolbooks Scheme
	As required during the year, order additional stock (both schoolbooks and related classroom resources)
	Organise for the return of schoolbooks and other reusable resources, such as calculators, from children at the end of each year

6.3 Appendix 3 – OGP Stationery 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)	Above EU Threshold (221,000)
Can be awarded on the basis of verbal or written quotes from one or more competitive supplier	Minimum of 3 Quotes (or eTenders)	eTenders	eTenders & OJEU
Email request or RFQ Template	RFQ Template from SPU	OGP Template or CFT template document from SPU	OGP Template or CFT template document from SPU
Quote submitted in writing or email	Submission response by email	Submit tender response via tender post box on eTenders platform	Submit tender response via tender post-box on eTenders
1 – 2 weeks to respond	14 days	21 days	Minimum 35 days Open Competition
Lowest Price	Most economically advantageous tender (MEAT)	MEAT	MEAT
Select Lowest Price	Evaluate offers against spec, qualification and award criteria	Evaluate offers against spec, qualification and award criteria	Evaluate offers against spec, qualification and award criteria
Email results	Email results with reasons	Standstill period of 14 days is recommended by the CSSO Issue Standstill Notices	Standstill period of 14 days is mandatory Remedies Directive applies Issue Standstill notice
	Publish contract award notice on eTenders for contracts above €25,000	Publish contract award notice on eTenders	Publish contract award notice on eTenders

6.4 Appendix 4 – 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-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](#)

[Circular 60/2017 Roll out and operation of the Financial Support Services Unit \(FSSU\) at Primary Level](#)

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

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

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

