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The Board of Management,
St. Luke's National School,
O'Mahony's Avenue,
Montenotte, Cork
T23DF30

Free Schoolbooks Scheme Policy

Introduction:

This policy has been developed in response to the Department of Education's introduction of the Free Schoolbooks Scheme for Primary Schools. Since the 2023/24 school year, Parents/Guardians are no longer 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.

This policy was developed in April 2025 and will be published on the school website and will be available in hardcopy format from the office on request.

The key principles of the scheme are:

- Schoolbooks, workbooks and copybooks will be chosen to support the implementation of the teaching and learning in the school and the provision of an appropriate, modern and stimulating curriculum to children and young people.
- All children and young people will have access to free schoolbooks, workbooks, copybooks and where possible, some related classroom resources.
- While schoolbooks remain the property of the school, children and young people should be allowed to bring schoolbooks home in order to complete homework or to allow families to stay connected with their child's learning in school.
- No costs for schoolbooks, workbooks or copybooks will be sought from parents/guardians.

Rationale:

This policy has been established in line with the Department of Education 'Schoolbooks Grant: Guidance for Primary and Special Schools', published in April 2025. Primary schools and special schools will retain the agency and discretion to determine how they wish to implement the curriculum by choosing the books and resources that best meet the needs of their pupils. The scheme is operated by the principal, secretary and an annually appointed administrator in consultation with teaching staff on behalf of the Board of Management.

Benefits for Families:

The main benefit for parents/guardians is that the cost of schoolbooks, workbooks and copybooks is now removed from parents and will be borne by the State. Parents/Guardians will also have peace of mind that their child will have the same schoolbooks, workbooks and copybooks as all other children and young people in their class.

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The Department has produced an information leaflet for parents/guardians which is published at www.gov.ie/schoolbookschemes and has been emailed to all primary schools.

Schools must circulate this information leaflet to all families with children entering or currently enrolled in the school.

Funding Calculation and Administrator Payment:

As the scheme is now implemented in every recognised primary and special school it is expected that schools have used the funding provided to purchase stocks of schoolbooks and other resources (such as calculators) which are now available for re-use in the 2025/26 and in future school years.

The funding allocated to the scheme takes account of this and is calculated to build on existing stocks and provide sufficient funding for additional schoolbooks, workbooks and copybooks.

Funding for the upcoming school year is calculated at €80 per pupil based on enrolments on 30th September of the previous school year.

Schools are expected to absorb costs needed to cover any increase in pupil numbers (see guidance document for exception to this).

There is currently an annual administration support grant paid to schools to pay for the administration of the scheme. The administration role can be awarded to 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. This funding will be kept under review by the department going forward. Duties associated with the role are available on request from the principal - examples of these can also be found below under "Roles and Responsibilities".

The daily rate sanctioned by the Department for this work is set out in the Guidance document published by the Department annually. The payment will be processed by the school through the schools Payroll system which is operated by School Accounting. Deductions will be made as appropriate. Our school currently gets funding for 3 days to carry out the duties associated with the role. Payment of the grant will come in June, therefore the school will pay the administrator in July/August on completion of the duties associated with the role.

Surplus funding in St. Luke's will be retained and rolled over into the following year. We will not use surplus funds to purchase perishable or short lifespan materials/resources such as stationery. This is in line with the school giving consideration to the potential need to purchase extra books throughout the school year or in the following school year.

Scope of Scheme:

Schools are permitted discretion in how the schoolbook grant funding is used to achieve its core aim. This discretion is based on the understanding that the grant removes the overall cost for parents/guardians of schoolbooks, workbooks, copybooks and, where possible, additional classroom resources.

Funding provides for the cost of all schoolbooks, workbooks and copybooks as outlined in the guidance document.

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The Primary Schoolbook Scheme does not include any costs associated with extra-curricular lessons including swimming.

Parents/Guardians must not be asked to purchase or to make a contribution to the school towards the cost of schoolbooks, workbooks or copybooks.

All schoolbooks remain the property of the school. Children may be permitted to take books home throughout the year, for example in doing homework tasks or to allow parents/guardians stay connected with their child's learning in school, but schoolbooks must be returned to school in good condition after use.

Roles and Responsibilities:

We recognise that all parties play a role in the successful implementation of the Free Schoolbooks Scheme in St. Luke's NS. The following are key roles and responsibilities of individuals and parties:

Principal:

- Assist in the recruitment of a suitable candidate to work on the administration of the scheme and go through the tasks to be completed with the successful candidate. It is foreseen that this role will be filled internally by a member of staff.
- **NOTE:** The Chairperson will decide on the recruitment process and have the final say on recruitment if more than one applicant comes forward.
- Send updated Class lists to teachers for upcoming school year
- Compile booklist received from each individual class teacher and related classroom resources required for each class - May 31st Deadline; forward these to the administrator.
- Liaise with the secretary after the audit and establish, and list, the total number of new schoolbooks, workbooks and copybooks that need to be purchased.
- Establish Budget Breakdown
- Determine what related classroom resources will be covered by the grant
- Decide on a supplier(s) for schoolbooks, workbooks, copybooks and any related classroom resources being provided and place order/s - consult with Administrator
- Arrange for payment to issue to shops and suppliers in a timely manner - with Administrator
- 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 (including new pupils parents)
- Compile a mandatory income and expenditure report and return it to the Department
- Cooperate with the Department if selected to participate in the evaluation of the scheme

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Secretary:

- Ensure that there is an adequate system in place to catalogue schoolbooks. From the 2025/26 school year, each textbook/reusable workbook will be given an individual code/identifier. These will then be assigned to specific children (class teachers) and checked at the end of each school year.
- The secretary will be responsible for the smooth operation of this system in collaboration with class teachers and the administrator.
- Example of Code/identifier: Bua na Cainte 5 - STLBNC5001, STLBNC5002 etc
- Complete an audit of the current stock of books, workbooks, copybooks and or classroom resources that can be reused - ahead of new books being purchased (May annually).
- Liaise with shops and suppliers in relation to any issues - with Administrator
- Ensure all the necessary teaching resources/copyrights are provided by the relevant publishers - check in with teachers at beginning of school year
- As required during the year, order additional stock (both schoolbooks and related classroom resources) - consult with Principal before any purchase/order is made

Grant Administrator:

- Adhere to public procurement guidelines including seeking and receiving the required number of quotes from schoolbook shops and suppliers and adhering to advertising and tendering requirements where applicable
- Decide on a supplier(s) for schoolbooks, workbooks, copybooks and any related classroom resources being provided and place order/s - consult with Principal
- Liaise with shops and suppliers in relation to any issues - with Secretary
- 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 - with Principal
- Arrange for a cover to be placed on schoolbooks to help extend their lifespan
- Sort schoolbooks and related classroom resources by class grouping and within classes as appropriate

Teachers:

- Devise book lists including required books, workbooks and copybooks for the year ahead - deadline for submission to Principal - May 31st.
- In devising these lists, teachers are asked to take stock of already available books and programmes in their classrooms in order to minimise the annual expenditure and in line with the school's sustainability goals.

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- Teachers are also encouraged to minimise the amount of workbooks to be placed on a booklist with sustainability and cost cutting in mind as workbooks are perishable, single use items in many instances.
- Work alongside the school secretary in using codes/identifiers on books that are assigned to pupils in order to keep track of books going missing/being damaged. Good practice in this regard would be for example to assign all books with "001" code to the same pupil. This can be recorded on teachers' own files/format or by using a spreadsheet.
- Organise for the return of schoolbooks and other reusable resources, such as calculators, from children at the end of each year.

Families and Pupils:

- Take good care of books and materials that are on loan from the school for the duration of the school year.
- Ensure books and materials are returned in good condition
- Where a child leaves the school - books should be returned
- No deposits or charges will be charged to families for Schoolbooks, workbooks or copybooks in St. Luke's NS.

Lost or Damaged Books:

Schoolbooks are owned by the school. It is important to ensure that pupils and their families understand their crucial responsibilities in ensuring the sustainability of this scheme.

Families should understand that it is a requirement that books are returned, in good condition, to the school in accordance with this policy.

Badly damaged books or books that are not returned may be dealt with in line with the school Code of Behaviour, which covers loss or damage to school property.

Sustainability:

St. Luke's NS endeavours to make every effort to reduce wastage under this scheme. We look to adopt a cost-conscious and an environment-conscious approach to the selection of schoolbooks, workbooks, copybooks and related classroom resources.

To achieve this, when purchasing classroom resources, teachers are asked to consider what resources pupils already have in their possession and also to give consideration to schemes that are already available in the school/classroom.

Teachers should consider the lifespan of books and other resources giving particular consideration to the reduction of single use books such as workbooks.

Covers will be placed on all books in an effort to protect them and prolong their lifespan.

Communication:

The Principal will communicate with parents on an annual basis in regards to the ongoing operation and/or updates made to the scheme.

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The Principal will also communicate the operation and relevant updates of the scheme with school staff, BOM and all other relevant parties on an annual basis in the Summer Term.

Procurement:

Principal and Administrator will follow OGP guidelines when purchasing schoolbooks, workbooks and other related materials - www.spu.ie email: support@ogp.ie

The school will endeavour wherever possible to engage in Green Public Procurement, taking heed of the "Green Public Procurement Guidance for the Public Sector." 2024 guidance available [Here](#)

<https://gppcriteria.gov.ie> can also be consulted

Documents to be Kept for Audit Purposes:

- Annual Booklists
- Tendering information - list of tenders and details of their quotations, criteria for selection, tender award record (pdf of email notifying suppliers of award of contract)
- Order lists
- Invoices
- Receipts
- Income and Expenditure Report
- Refunds - if applicable
- [Income and Expenditure Sheet](#)
- [Task List](#)

Awarding Contracts to Suppliers:

- Contracts under €5,000 (ex VAT) may be awarded on the basis of verbal or written quotes from one or more competitive suppliers
- Contracts under €50,000 (ex VAT) may be awarded on the basis of 3 quotations - template available <https://www.spu.ie/schoolbooks-scheme/>
- Contracts over €50,000 (ex VAT) must be published on eTenders and the Schools Procurement Unit should be contacted for support.
- Follow Procurement guidelines

Irish Copyright Licensing Agency:

Information has been circulated to staff around copyright and photocopying. License held centrally by the Department of Education. The following are the key takeaways which St. Luke's NS abide by:

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Schools can copy....

- Up to 5% or...
- One complete chapter from a book, including related notes/reference
- One article from an issue of a journal, magazine or newspaper
- A short story or poem not exceeding 10 pages in length from an anthology
- The equivalent amount from a digital/online publication not organised in a traditional manner
- Complete images from a published work and from the internet

For the purpose of teaching and learning in the classroom.

Financial Management:

- Grant funding is ring fenced meaning it can only be used for the purpose intended.
- St. Luke's will keep detailed records of how funding provided under the scheme is spent - annually. This will be reflected in the Treasurers accounts folder on Drive and in the Free School Books Scheme folder on Drive.
- Invoices, receipts and other records including details of quotations, booklists will be kept for a period of 7 years.
- An income and expenditure report will be completed by the Principal annually on issue from the department.
- Schools may be subject to audit by the FSSU.
- Payment to suppliers will be made on receipt of goods and confirmation that the order is complete and fulfilled as best practice in our school - deposits may be paid with the Principal's consent.

Review and Reporting:

St. Luke's NS will review the implementation of this scheme as an ongoing practice:

- Reviewing how effectively the scheme is operating during the year
- Identifying possible improvements to the operation of the scheme, this policy and school practices
- Assessing the quality of service provided by suppliers
- Examining our policy on minimising the replacement of books and workbooks
- Considering further measures to minimise future costs.

Ratification and Review of this Policy:

This Policy was first ratified at a meeting of the Board of Management on May 20th 2025.

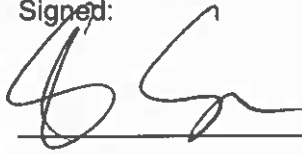
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It will be reviewed annually in April/May and updated as needed or as further guidance is issued from the Department of Education.

This version of the policy is reviewed, approved and ratified by the board in line with the below signatures.

Signed:



Date:

28/4/26

Chairperson



Date:

28/4/26

Principal

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