

DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION AND SKILLS



# Guidelines for Developing Textbook Rental Schemes in Schools





# Contents

Foreword	3
Introduction	5
Principles of good practice	6
Getting started	7
Managing the finances	8
Choosing and managing the textbooks	10
Digital media	13
I'm a parent – how can I help the book rental scheme?	14
<b>Appendix A</b>	
Timeline for setting up a book rental scheme	16
<b>Appendix B</b>	
Sample school book rental scheme policy – primary	18
<b>Appendix C</b>	
Sample letter and agreement form for parents – primary	19
<b>Appendix D</b>	
Sample school book rental scheme policy – post-primary	20
<b>Appendix E</b>	
Sample set of accounts in a primary school	22
<b>Appendix F</b>	
Sample set of accounts in a post-primary school (non DEIS school)	23
<b>Appendix G</b>	
Sample set of accounts in a post-primary school (DEIS school)	24
<b>Appendix H</b>	
Code of practice of the Irish Educational Publishers' Association	26
Acknowledgements and references	27





**Ruairí Quinn, TD**  
**Minister for Education and Skills**

## **Foreword**

Textbooks are one of the many supports that teachers can use to deliver a modern and interesting curriculum to their students. I am conscious, however, that buying textbooks is a very significant cost for parents and I believe that textbook rental schemes are one practical way in which this cost can be reduced greatly. Many schools operate very successful rental schemes and parents express strong support for such schemes.

These guidelines were developed to help schools to establish textbook rental schemes. They are based on the experience of a number of schools and parents' associations that operate effective textbook rental schemes and are intended to share good practice and practical advice.

The guidelines have been written with the assistance of a number of schools and organisations, including the National Parents' Council-Primary, the National Parents' Council-Post-Primary, the Society of St Vincent de Paul, Barnardos and the Irish Educational Publishers' Association as well as the education partners and other individuals who made valuable comments on these guidelines. I want to thank all of these schools and organisations, and the Inspectorate of my Department who visited schools and collected examples of good practice, for their contributions to these guidelines.

I hope that the practical advice in these guidelines will help all schools and parents. Schools with existing schemes may find here new ideas to help them improve their own schemes, and I hope that schools that do not yet operate rental schemes will be encouraged to do so. I am convinced that these schemes can make a real difference to the lives of families and young people and I look forward to increased availability of rental schemes in schools in the years ahead.

**Ruairí Quinn, TD**  
**Minister for Education and Skills**



## Introduction

School book rental schemes can make a very significant difference to the cost of providing textbooks for pupils/students. These guidelines aim to assist schools in the establishment and running of book rental schemes. The guidelines provide principles of good practice based on the experience of schools and parents' associations that operate successful rental schemes. In the Appendices to the guidelines, you will find practical examples of school book rental policies, letters and agreement forms.

## Why should we have a school book rental scheme?

Establishing a school book rental scheme has the potential to make a very significant impact on the price of the annual book bill for parents of primary and post-primary pupils/students. The cost of textbooks needed by a student varies depending on the choice of textbooks used in the school. Some estimates of the current cost of textbooks at primary level can range from approximately €60 in infant classes to €150 in sixth class. At second level, the cost of textbooks depends on the student's year group and on the number of subjects taken. The most expensive years are first year, where the cost is estimated at €350, and fifth year where the cost is estimated at €500. This is a heavy burden for many families and there is genuine public concern that it could be a barrier to continuing in education for some students.

School book rental schemes remove the need for parents to purchase new textbooks and are also considered as a viable alternative to annual second-hand book sales. Schools with established schemes indicated an average saving to parents of almost eighty per cent of the cost of buying new books.

## Cost savings are not the only advantage

In addition to the cost savings for parents, a school book rental scheme ensures that all pupils/students will have their books, and the same edition of each book, at the beginning of the school year. Such a scheme also allows flexibility for students to change subjects or to move to a different level of study without placing an added financial burden on parents. This can be especially useful in first year at second level, where students may be offered a "taster programme" of many subjects from which they choose the subjects they will study in Junior Cycle. An established scheme can provide teachers and pupils/students with access to a wider range of resource material to support teaching and learning.

## Textbook publishers and school book rental schemes

The main Irish educational publishers have agreed to apply a Code of Practice designed to help reduce the cost of textbooks for parents and schools. As part of this code, publishers have given commitments to maintain new editions of textbooks in print for a minimum of six years, to co-operate with individual schools in the development of textbook rental schemes and to have improved engagement with school communities, parents, teachers and other stakeholders.

## Principles of good practice

The experience of school communities that operate book rental schemes suggests that a number of simple yet fundamental points are of key importance in the success of a book rental scheme.

- Collaboration, consultation and co-operation between school and home will ensure the success of a school book rental scheme
- Schools should make every effort to involve as many parents as possible in discussions regarding the establishment of the book rental scheme and in reviewing how well it is operating. While the book rental scheme will be operated under the auspices of the board of management of the school, parents and parents' associations can play a very valuable role in the ongoing organisation and management of the rental schemes
- The school should draw up a book rental policy following consultation with staff, students and parents
- Successful school book rental schemes operate on a self-financing basis with costs met by rental income supplemented by school book grants from the Department of Education and Skills
- Often, school communities engage in fundraising activities to obtain initial capital to establish the rental scheme. The gradual phasing in of the rental scheme helps alleviate the initial financial outlay to the school. Proper financial management procedures need to be applied at all times and, over time, the rental scheme should operate on a self-financing basis
- Annual audited accounts from the rental scheme should be provided to the board of management and published to parents
- Books should be owned by the school and may consist of both new and second-hand books
- Pupils/students should retain books for one year (for example at primary level) or for an examination cycle (in second-level schools) at the end of which the books are returned to the school
- Pupils/students should be expected to keep the books in good condition and parents should be requested to replace or cover the costs of damaged and/or misplaced books
- Annual book lists should be compiled by the rental scheme co-ordinator, arising from the decisions of teachers/subject departments and school management on the requirements of the class/group/year/subject
- Arrangements in relation to the payment by parents of book rental costs should be managed so that they do not coincide with other back-to-school expenses, for example, uniform costs
- The policy should include a regular review of the operation of the rental scheme and how its effectiveness can be enhanced.



## Getting started

The key steps that are involved in setting up a school book rental scheme are outlined below and in the sections that follow. They are drawn from the experience of many school communities but may need to be adapted to suit the circumstances of each individual school. Appendix A provides a more detailed timeline of the specific tasks that need to be undertaken when administering the scheme.

### Generating a shared commitment to the book rental scheme

- Establishing a book rental scheme requires careful planning and a strong commitment from school management and all of the school community. Schemes work best where the management of the school supports the initiative and works closely with the school's parents and students to establish and operate the scheme
- The management of the school, especially the principal and deputy principal, play a key role in generating a shared commitment to the scheme among all staff members and the school community. Awareness raising about the potential of the scheme among parents and students, and working closely with members of the board of management and parents' association will be very useful in getting "buy-in" and support for the project
- For a book rental scheme to work effectively and efficiently, time and commitment are required from all concerned and the effective operation of the scheme will be learned from and improved upon on an iterative basis from year to year.

### Administering the scheme

- A co-ordinator, with ultimate responsibility for the scheme, is appointed. The co-ordination and administration of the scheme is normally undertaken by school management, teachers and/or ancillary staff, in partnership with parents
- An operating committee, committed to assisting in the administration of the scheme, is established. The co-ordinator and committee are appointed from within the school's existing resources – these may include both teachers and members of the parents' association
- A separate bank account is opened to cater for all book rental transactions. The accounts will be stored in the school for the same amount of time as general school accounts and may be audited. Records are maintained of all transactions and are reviewed annually
- A set of income and expenditure accounts and financial management details of the book rental scheme should be included within the annual board of management accounts.

## Managing the finances

### Funding of the scheme

- The Department of Education and Skills (DES) book grant and a portion of the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) funding if applicable, are utilised in establishing and running the book rental scheme
- The school's board of management and/or the wider school community may contribute to the initial outlay in establishing a book rental scheme. Initial capital funding for the scheme may be raised through loans or fundraising. With the phased introduction of a scheme, it becomes self-financing
- The rental charge is normally determined by factors such as:
  - whether the scheme is new or well established
  - if second-hand books are used within the scheme
  - the number of subjects chosen. Often, only some subjects are covered by the scheme, especially in the initial stages. Later, the range of subjects or the range of books available within the scheme can be expanded
- Decisions to be made include:
  - whether a deposit should be paid by students joining the scheme
  - whether there will be reduced rental charges for families with more than one student involved in the scheme
  - whether to include/exclude workbooks, copies and/or other materials in the rental fee
  - the cost of the rental fee (this should be reasonable for families)

### Use of deposits

- If a deposit is to be charged as a security, this deposit should be a percentage of the cost of the textbooks and would normally be between 10% and 20%

### Managing the money

- An effective textbook rental scheme will require careful management of the available funds and transparent reporting to the board of management and parents
- A separate bank account is opened to cater for all book rental transactions. The accounts will be stored in the school for the same amount of time as general school accounts and may be audited. Records are maintained of all transactions and are reviewed annually



- Given that school management is ultimately responsible for the operation of the book rental scheme, a set of income and expenditure accounts and financial management details of the book rental scheme should be included within the annual board of management accounts. This set of accounts should be communicated annually to staff and parents, although individual family contributions should remain confidential. The accounts should also be made available when there is an inspection of the school.

### **What size budget will we require?**

- The success of a book rental scheme will depend to a large extent on how well it is administered and how well the books are cared for from year to year so that they can be used for a number of years
- The success of the scheme will also depend on how many books and subjects are in the scheme
- A sample set of accounts for a book rental scheme in a primary school may be found in Appendix E. This set of accounts shows how a set of books will need to be kept for at least five years in order for a school to cover its costs
- Sample sets of accounts for book rental schemes in post-primary schools may be found in Appendix F and Appendix G.

## Choosing and managing the textbooks

### Choosing the textbooks

- The teaching staff, in line with school policy and under the guidance of senior management, decides on the list of textbooks and/or workbook requirements for individual subjects/class groups. Arrangements are put in place to inform the scheme's co-ordinator
- Details of the publications and teaching materials that are available in Irish and for teaching through the medium of Irish in primary and post-primary schools are available on the website of COGG (An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta, [www.cogg.ie](http://www.cogg.ie)). This information is updated regularly and COGG organises workshops and exhibitions from time to time to inform teachers about materials available for Gaeltacht and Irish-medium schools. This information is very valuable when the teaching staff decides on the list of textbooks for individual subjects/class groups
- The timely provision of information to the scheme's co-ordinator is essential for the efficient administration of the scheme. To this end, timetables and class lists/rotas need to be made available to teachers as early as possible to enable them to quantify their book requirements for the following year. New book lists are collated in April/May (or earlier if possible)
- The school's policy on the selection of textbooks should include consideration of the need for textbooks and/or workbooks, the criteria used in selecting texts and a commitment to keeping a text on the booklist for a specified period of time
- The school may use the book rental scheme for digital media support. It may not use the scheme for purchase of library books except for the purchase of take home library book starter readers for use in infant classes where they are used instead of a reading scheme.

### Use of workbooks

Generally, it is not recommended to include workbooks as part of the rental scheme, and the accounts that are included in the Appendices do not take the cost of workbooks into account. A number of strategies can be used to avoid the need for workbooks or to allow workbooks to be re-used from year to year. These include:

- Using electronic versions of the workbook – Most publishers now have electronic versions of their books available and these can be used by the whole class from the interactive whiteboard
- Photocopyable master workbook – These workbooks can legally be photocopied, although the cost of photocopying can exceed the expected savings on workbooks. When used with the Smartpal Clearboard or a copybook, they can be recycled many times
- Using visualisers – The visualiser is gradually making its way into classrooms throughout the country. It allows a page of a workbook to be projected onto a board or wall for use by a class or group of children

- Smartpal clearboard – This device is like a plastic pocket. The workbook fits into it and the child writes the answers on the plastic sheet with a small marker. The marker can easily be cleaned off and another page of the workbook put in
- Copybook – An old-fashioned copybook can be used to record the answers to questions in the workbook
- Use of individual whiteboards – These are A4 sized whiteboards which the child uses to record answers to workbook exercises.

### **Sourcing of textbooks**

- Textbooks are purchased from various sources including the local retailer, educational publishers and on-line companies. Discounts from the retail cost of books may be negotiated, particularly when buying in bulk. Retailers may provide a book-covering service at a cost or a school may decide to provide its own book-covering service
- Initially the scheme may include second-hand books donated or purchased from parents, combined with new books
- A school may co-operate with other schools in the locality in exchanging/ordering books.

### **Organisation of textbooks**

- This is perhaps the most labour-intensive element of running a book rental scheme. The members of the organising committee form the core of the team that carries out this work; some schools also use ancillary staff and/or assistance from students in the vacation period to complete this work
- The co-ordinator and operating committee need to ensure that all practical tasks relating to the administration of the book rental scheme are concluded in time for the beginning of the new school year. This will include the cataloguing and covering of books and maintaining textbook records. Books can be stored in classrooms over the summer period
- To extend the life of textbooks as far as possible, protective covering is integral to the management of successful schemes. Most schools arrange for books to be covered/laminated in advance of rental to ensure their durability. The cost of covering is normally included in the rental fee
- In some schools, barcode and scanner systems are used to keep track of books and these have proven to be very effective.

### **Distribution of textbooks**

- An agreement that books will be properly maintained and replaced if lost is formulated with parents and students. A deposit may be collected at the beginning of the rental period and held by the school if the books are damaged, lost or badly maintained

- Rental fees are collected from students, together with a rental agreement form signed by parents. It is best to collect the rental agreement form and at least part of the fees well before the end of the previous school year. To assist in alleviating the financial burden on parents at the beginning of the school year, the collection of book rental fees may be paid in instalments
- The parents of children entering the junior infant class in primary schools and those entering first year in post-primary schools are informed as early as possible that the school has a rental scheme in operation and they are encouraged to avail of it
- Students are allotted a combination of new and second-hand books as appropriate. Textbooks used in rental schemes generally have a life span of 4 to 6 years
- Packs of books are distributed to students at the beginning of the school year. Name tags/barcodes are placed on each book in advance.

### **Return of textbooks**

- Students are reminded of textbook care and maintenance throughout the year
- At the end of the academic year, books are collected and checked and damaged books are repaired
- Books no longer in use are sold or recycled
- Booklists are compiled and books are ordered for the following year.

### **End-of-year review**

An annual review of the scheme is organised. 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 service from the book provider(s)
- Examining school policy on minimising the use of textbooks
- Considering measures to minimise future costs.

The views of school management, individual teachers, subject departments, parents and pupils/students are central to such a review, as, of course, are the views and experiences of the scheme co-ordinator and operating committee.

## Digital media

The use of digital resources by teachers and students in schools is increasing. While conventional textbooks are still widely used, a number of schools have introduced or are considering introducing e-books and other digital resources to enhance students' work in school and at home. E-books can be purchased from educational publishers or can be created by individual teachers, groups of teachers, or by schools.

### Advantages of digital media including e-books

- Digital media have the potential to enhance teaching and learning through:
  - stimulating the students' interest in the subject presented
  - enabling students to access a range of sources and types of information
  - supporting development of research skills
  - promoting creative, active and collaborative learning
- E-books can have a multi-media dimension. Embedding audio and video within texts adds to their interactivity
- Use of digital media can lead to the reduction in the use of conventional textbooks and workbooks. Digital content can be stored on a personal computer/laptop/tablet PC or other portable device thus reducing the weight of schoolbags
- Much digital content can be accessed free online.

### Managing digital media

Managing digital media in schools presents a number of challenges. Accordingly, there is a need to devise and implement a whole-school plan for technology integration/e-learning. In this regard, the following practical issues should be considered:

- Selection of e-books: some e-books are pdf copies of conventional books while others are more interactive
- Cost: the cost of e-books and associated services can be high
- Access issues:
  - adequate internet connectivity in the school is required
  - e-books may have to be read on a specific platform aligned with certain devices
  - while teachers can create e-books for their students, 'publishing' content as an e-book does not mean it can be accessed by all devices
- Licensing issues: the licensing of e-books to a student may be for that student only, for an agreed period of time and/or on a specific device
- Customising e-books: there may be limits to the personalised content/annotations that students can add to their e-books.
- You can access further advice on the use of digital media at:  
<http://www.ncte.ie/ICTAdviceSupport/AdviceSheets/> and  
<http://www.ncte.ie/elearningplan/>

## I'm a parent – how can I help the book rental scheme?

Book rental schemes work best when they are supported fully by all of the school community. Parents make a very important contribution in supporting book rental schemes to operate successfully.

### **Before your child goes to school, you can:**

- Ask the school if it has a book rental scheme when you apply to enrol your child in the school
- Tell the school that you would like to participate in a book rental scheme if they have one available
- Participate in the book rental scheme when your child begins attending the school
- Pay the required deposit and rental fee promptly (for children entering junior infants in primary schools and first year in post-primary schools, the fee and deposit are usually paid in the term before your child comes to school for the first time - often in the April, May or June before the beginning of the school year).

### **If your child's school has a book rental scheme, you can:**

- Apply to have your child participate each year in the book rental scheme
- Pay the required deposit and rental fee promptly (usually in the term before the beginning of the school year)
- Impress on your child that the books need to be looked after carefully: encourage your child not to write on the books
- Ensure that your child returns the borrowed books promptly at the end of the school year
- Share your experience of the book rental scheme with other parents who may not be aware of the benefits of the scheme.

### **You can help to support the organisation of the book rental scheme in your child's school by:**

- Suggesting to the principal of the school or a member of the school's board of management or parents' association that establishing a book rental scheme would be beneficial
- Helping to create an awareness among parents and the parents' association of the benefits of book rental schemes; for example, a good idea might be to invite a speaker from another school where a book rental scheme operates successfully to speak at a parents' association meeting
- Contributing to any working group that the board of management may establish to help set up or run a book rental scheme

- Complying with the rules that are set down for the operation of the rental scheme
- Encouraging the school's board of management and parents' association to consider the need to keep changes of textbooks to a minimum each year
- Volunteering to assist the working group operating the book rental scheme; for example...
  - by helping to cover the books in the rental scheme before the beginning of the school year
  - by sorting, tagging and checking books before they are distributed to students
  - by making up sets of books for distribution to students
  - by helping to check in returning books at the end of the school year
  - by helping to clean and repair returned books used in the rental scheme
  - by assisting the working group with collecting and accounting for rental fees from students and their parents
- Donating good quality, up-to-date second-hand books that you bought but that your child no longer needs to the school for use in the rental scheme
- Offering to assist at fundraising events or to organise sponsorship to help raise funds for buying new books
- Sharing your experience of participating in the book rental scheme with the school community in other schools where rental schemes may not be operating – your advice and experience could be invaluable in helping them to get started.

## Appendix A: Timeline for setting up a book rental scheme

### Term Two (January – March)

- A co-ordinator, with ultimate responsibility for the scheme, is appointed
- A separate bank account for the rental scheme is set up
- An operating committee is established to assist the co-ordinator, particularly at very intensive periods, for example, in June and September
- Booklists are distributed to teachers and any proposed changes are requested
- The co-ordinator, senior management and teachers finalise all decisions regarding the book scheme for the next academic year
- Decisions are made on costs, which books are part of scheme, if workbooks are included and the staged introduction of new books
- Retail costs of books are explored including discounts for buying in bulk with other schools
- Book covering options are explored
- Parents and students receive the school book rental scheme policy and application form

### Term Three (April – June)

- Parents are requested to donate or sell second-hand books to the scheme
- Final book lists are compiled
- The final retail cost of books is obtained
- The rental charge is determined for each pupil/student and a decision is made regarding rental charges for families with more than one pupil/student
- Decisions are made regarding the inclusion of copies, student diaries and/or other materials in the rental fee
- A decision is made regarding payment of a deposit
- Rental forms are distributed with a definite date for return
- A note is sent to students to check the condition of books to be returned to the scheme
- Previous years' books are collected
- The condition of books is checked by the school

- Book rental forms are sorted and filed
- Book deposits/fees are collected
- Stock is checked and a decision is made on how many new books to purchase
- New and second-hand books are ordered, delivered and covered
- Books are labelled with the school stamp
- A suitable database may be used to track and record the book rental scheme
- A barcode system, whereby a unique barcode is generated for each book, may be used to facilitate the rental and financial recording of the scheme
- Books are divided into packs for distribution and stored over the summer period in sealable containers in a damp-free environment
- An annual review of the book rental scheme is undertaken by all involved

### **Term One (August – December)**

- Each child's name label/barcode is placed on the books
- Books are distributed to students and a record is maintained
- The remainder of fees is collected, if relevant
- Students and parents are reminded that the books are the property of the school and of best practice regarding care and maintenance of the books.

## Appendix B

### Sample school book rental scheme policy – primary

#### Ash National School

#### School Book Rental Scheme

The scheme is voluntary. Book lists will be supplied to parents in the normal way.

A security deposit is payable on behalf of each student who joins the scheme. This deposit carries forward to the following year if all books are returned in good condition at the end of the current year. The security deposit will be held against the safe return of all books rented to pupils under the scheme. If books are lost or damaged, a percentage or all of this deposit will be retained to cover such loss or damage. Full compensation for lost books will be required before re-admission to the scheme. However, this deposit will be returned should a pupil leave the scheme having safely returned all the rented books within an acceptable condition of use.

Annual rental: A rental charge of €\_\_\_\_\_ per year will apply in addition to the security deposit of €\_\_\_\_\_. The payment of both charges will secure the rental of all relevant text books listed in the book list as and when required throughout the school year.

Purchase of workbooks, disposable materials and stationery will remain outside the scope of this scheme and remain the responsibility of the parents.

To qualify for admission to the scheme, the deposit and rental charge must be paid on or before 1 June each year.

The Department of Education and Skills Book Grant scheme will be operated separately from this scheme. Application forms for the book grant scheme can be obtained from the school office and must be submitted to the school office before 1 June. If a pupil is deemed eligible, a grant of €\_\_\_\_\_ will be set against the rental charge of €\_\_\_\_\_ leaving a balance of €\_\_\_\_\_ to be paid. The security deposit of €\_\_\_\_\_ will still be payable if you are a new entrant to the scheme.

Each pupil/parent will be required to sign a receipt for the books supplied which will be retained in the school.

The books supplied under the scheme will remain the property of the school and may be subject to inspection at any time by a member of the teaching staff.

Membership of the scheme is at the discretion of the board of management and the school principal. Any pupil found to be abusing, defacing or disposing of rented books will be dismissed from the scheme and will be required to supply their own textbooks for the remainder of their time in the school.

Books supplied under the scheme may be new or second hand at the discretion of the principal and board of management.

## Appendix C

### Sample letter and agreement form for parents – primary

#### Holly National School School Book Rental Scheme: Arrangements

Dear Parent/Guardian,

In the present financial climate it is important to keep cost to parents to a minimum. Our book rental scheme saves parents a lot of money, especially as children get older. The scheme is operated by our school's Parents' Council on behalf of the board of management with assistance from our deputy principal.

Parents pay €10 per child (infants to first class) or €20 (second class to sixth class) each year. This money is then used to buy sets of books for the class which are used by the children in school. With careful management the books can last for up to eight years. They are normally replaced because the books are out of date rather than because of the condition of the books. Parents of children who damage a book will be asked to replace the book.

The following table shows the value of the books which are rented in each class

Rang	Cost to Parents	Value of Books
Junior Infants	€ 10.00	€ 31.70
Senior Infants	€ 10.00	€ 32.35
First class	€ 10.00	€ 53.25
Second class	€ 20.00	€ 73.65
Third class	€ 20.00	€ 208.70
Fourth class	€ 20.00	€ 217.00
Fifth class	€ 20.00	€ 217.15
Sixth class	€ 20.00	€ 215.45
<b>Total</b>	<b>€130.00</b>	<b>€1049.25</b>

Please complete the form below and return it with the appropriate amount if you wish to participate in the Book Rental Scheme. The money should be paid before Wednesday 29th June. Cheques should be made payable to "Parents' Council, Holly National School".

Máire Ní Riain, Príomhoide

✂

#### Holly National School – School Book Rental Scheme

I have read and agree to the arrangements for participation in the School Book Rental Scheme. I wish to have my child avail of the scheme in the year 2012-13.

Name of pupil	
Class (2012-13)	
Name of teacher	
Fee enclosed (please tick)	<input type="checkbox"/> Infants – First Class €10 <input type="checkbox"/> Second-Sixth Class €20
Signed(parent/guardian)	

## Appendix D

### Sample School book rental scheme policy – post-primary

#### Oak Community College

#### School Book Rental Scheme

##### Aim

That all students are facilitated to have text books at minimum expense to their parents

##### Background

During the 1980s a book rental scheme was set up in our school and has remained in existence since then. In the early stages a small number of standard text books were provided through the scheme. With the passage of time, curriculum development and increased student enrolment, a more comprehensive scheme has been developed. All students continue to avail of the scheme.

##### Current practice

Parents are informed in March/April of the cost of the rental/charges for the upcoming year. Parents of incoming students are informed when an offer of a place in the school is being made (December/January). Traditionally payment was due in early September but since 2010 incoming students have paid in May before the start of the school year. This practice is in the process of being extended to all year groups to enable the school to source, purchase and process books before the commencement of the school year.

##### Annual Charges

Junior Cycle students - €100

Transition Year - €80

Leaving Certificate Applied - €40

Leaving Certificate Traditional - €120

- Maximum Family Charge which also includes other school charges - €270
- The annual grant from the DES/local VEC is distributed throughout the school and covers the shortfall caused by families unable to pay
- Parents have the option to pay by instalment

##### Procedure

- Teacher subject groups meet in March/April to decide on text book requirements for the upcoming year. Where possible the existing stock of text books is used
- A final list for each year group/subject is presented to the principal before the end of May
- For this system to work effectively and efficiently the school needs to know the composition of all subject groups in each year by mid-May

- Third Year, Transition Year and Sixth Year students return all texts at the conclusion of the State Examinations/year
- Outgoing First Year, Second Year and Fifth Year students do not return their texts in May

### **Purchasing books**

- Books are purchased, where possible, from a sole supplier, in line with the local VEC's procurement procedure

### **Maintenance**

- Students are actively encouraged to take proper care of texts on loan to them by the school
- Stocktaking of all books returned is carried out annually and the condition of books is monitored. At this stage a decision is made by the book rental personnel, in conjunction with subject teachers and the principal, as to whether the stock of any particular text is of sufficient quality to be issued again. If deemed unusable they are sent for recycling
- Since 2009 all new texts are barcoded using a computerised book rental package. Each student's textbooks are recorded on the system. All new texts are covered using a durable plastic cover

### **Distribution of books**

- Subject teachers procure books for their classes by completing an order slip which is passed on to the book rental personnel for processing. A set of adhesive labels with the names of each student accompanies the requisition form
- Texts are allocated by book rental personnel having been counted, scanned and checked. Teachers collect them from the library and distribute to class

### **Return of books**

- Books are scanned back into the system when students have finished using them
- If books are not returned the book rental person follows up on same
- The cost of lost/excessively damaged books is borne by the student/parents

### **Maintenance of books**

- Students are responsible for all textbooks issued to them by the school. While all textbooks remain the property of the school, students are required to handle them with care. An undertaking to this effect is included in the school's Code of Behaviour which students and parents sign
- Subject teachers play a vital role in ensuring the care and condition of textbooks

### **Note**

- Workbooks and examination papers are not supplied by the scheme.

## Sample set of accounts in a primary school

	(1) Number of textbooks per child	(2) Cost of textbooks per child	(3) Class size	(4) Total cost of textbooks for class	(5) Cost of book covers per child	(6) Total cost of covers for class	(7) Total cost per class	(8) Income per annum
Rang I	7	€43.60	28	€1,220.80	€5.95	€166.60	<b>€1,387.40</b>	€588.00
Rang II	10	€75.75	28	€2,121.00	€8.50	€238.00	<b>€2,359.00</b>	€588.00
Rang III	11	€98.45	28	€2,756.60	€9.35	€261.80	<b>€3,018.40</b>	€588.00
Rang IV	14	€119.70	28	€3,351.60	€11.90	€333.20	<b>€3,684.80</b>	€588.00
Rang V	12	€114.94	28	€3,218.32	€10.20	€285.60	<b>€3,503.92</b>	€588.00
Rang VI	11	€102.45	28	€2,868.60	€9.35	€261.80	<b>€3,130.40</b>	€588.00
<b>Totals</b>		<b>€554.89</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>€15,536.92</b>		<b>€1,547.00</b>	<b>€17,083.92</b>	<b>€3,528.00</b>

The table above summarises the costs for one primary school in setting up and maintaining a book rental scheme for pupils in first to sixth class. Sets of textbooks for the scheme cost from €43.60 in first class to €119.70 in fourth class [See column (2)]. With an average of 28 pupils in each class, the total value of the textbooks was €15,536.92 [Column (4)]. Textbook covers which were needed to prolong the life of the books added another €1,547 [Column (6)] to the cost giving a total investment of €17,083.92 [Column (7)]. The school received €1,848 per annum in a book grant from the Department of Education and Skills [168 pupils @ €11 per pupil] and set a charge of €10 per pupil giving it an income of €588 per class or €3,528 for all pupils. Given this income, the scheme will have to achieve a life of approximately five years for each textbook, for it to break even.

## Appendix F Sample set of accounts in a post-primary school (non-DEIS school)

	(1) Number of textbooks per student	(2) Cost of textbooks per student	(3) Size of year group	(4) Total cost of textbooks for year group	(5) Cost of book covers per student	(6) Total cost of covers for year group	(7) Total cost per year group	(8) Income per annum (cost of rental and grant)
First Year	13	€341.00	154	€52,514.00	€13.00	€2,002.00	€54,516.00	€14,476.00
Second Year	14	€352.00	150	€52,800.00	€14.00	€2,100.00	€54,900.00	€14,100.00
Third Year	14	€352.00	144	€50,688.00	€14.00	€2,016.00	€52,704.00	€13,536.00
Transition Year	3	€75.00	88	€6,600.00	€3.00	€264.00	€6,864.00	€3,960.00
Fifth Year	9	€270.00	125	€33,750.00	€9.00	€1,125.00	€34,875.00	€10,875.00
Sixth Year	9	€270.00	108	€29,160.00	€9.00	€972.00	€30,132.00	€9,396.00
<b>Totals</b>		<b>€1,660.00</b>	<b>769</b>	<b>€225,512.00</b>		<b>€8,479.00</b>	<b>€233,991.00</b>	<b>€66,343.00</b>

The table above summarises the costs for one post-primary school in setting up and maintaining a book rental scheme for students from first year to sixth year. Sets of textbooks for the scheme cost from €75 in Transition Year to €352 in second and third year [See column (2)]. The total value of the textbooks for all year groups was €225,512 [Column (4)]. Textbook covers which were needed to prolong the life of the books added another €8,479 [Column (6)] to the cost, giving a total investment of €233,991 [Column (7)]. The school received €18,456 per annum in a book grant from the Department of Education and Skills [769 students @ €24 per student] and set a charge of €70 per student in junior cycle and €7 per book in senior cycle giving it an income of €47,887 in rent from all students. Given a total income of €66,343 [Column (8)], the scheme will have to achieve a life of approximately four years for each textbook, for it to break even.

## Appendix G Sample set of accounts in a post-primary school (DEIS school)

<b>INCOME</b>						<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	
(1) Year	(2) Number of students	(3) Rental charge	(4) Number of students	(5) Income	(7)	(8) Expenditure	
First Year	67	Full charge=€90	33	2,970	Purchase of additional new and replacement textbooks	21,170	
		Reduced charge=€60	34	2,040	Book covers	1,148	
Second Year	76	Full charge=€90	43	3,870	Repairs to books	1,000	
		Reduced charge=€60	33	1,980	Book covering machines	2,230	
Third Year	71	Full charge=€90	31	2,790	Book tracking system and licence	800	
		Reduced charge=€60	40	2,400	School diaries	2,403	
Transition Year	71	Not included in rental scheme		0	Booklets and materials for students	3,090	
Fifth Year	63	Full charge=€80	45	3,600	Miscellaneous expenses	500	
		Reduced charge=€50	18	900			
Sixth Year	43	Full charge=€80	26	2,080			
		Reduced charge=€50	17	850			
Sub totals	391			23,480			
<b>(6) Other income</b>							
DES Grants 391 students @€39							
Surplus balance from previous year brought forward							
<b>Total income</b>						<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>32,341</b>
<b>42,729</b>							
<b>SUMMARY (9)</b>							
<b>Total income</b>						<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>32,341</b>
						<b>Excess of income over expenditure</b>	<b>10,388</b>
							<b>42,729</b>

The table on the previous page sets out the accounts of a book rental scheme in a DEIS post-primary school for one school year. The scheme has been operating for a number of years.

The book rental scheme operates for all year groups except Transition Year [see columns (1) and (2)]. The school has decided not to offer the rental scheme for Transition Year because it believes that the demand for textbooks is lower and the range of textbooks less predictable in this year.

The school has decided to set different levels of rental charge. The standard annual charge at junior cycle is €90 and €80 at senior cycle. Reduced charges are applied to students that the school considers are in need of additional supports – €60 at junior cycle and €50 at senior cycle [see columns (3) and (4)].

The total available fund is €42,729, made up of rental charges, grants from the Department of Education and Skills and a surplus carried forward from the previous year [see column (5) and section (6)].

Total expenditure is shown on the right [see columns (7) and (8)]. A sum of €21,170 was used to purchase sets of new books and to replace damaged and unusable stock. Covers and covering machinery were further large expenses.

The summary [see section (9)] shows that the scheme retained a surplus of €10,388 to carry over into the next school year. The school expected to use part of the surplus for the replacement of the book covering machines and much of the remainder for new stock.

## Appendix H

### Code of practice of the Irish Educational Publishers' Association

The main Irish educational publishers have agreed to implement a Code of Practice, designed to help reduce the cost of textbooks for parents and schools, as follows:

- Publishers will not revise any text within at least four years - unless there is a change in the curriculum, the state examination, 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
- The educational publishers will work with the Department of Education and Skills to develop a textbook voucher scheme to facilitate the work of any charitable organisation
- 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
- The publishers will aim to have improved engagement with school communities, parents, teachers and other stakeholders.

The main educational publishers have also made a commitment to the Minister for Education and Skills that they will offer substantial discounts to schools that purchase textbooks in bulk for use in school book rental schemes.

July 2011

## Acknowledgements and references

Cooney/Carey Consultants, School Books in Ireland: Cost to Parents, Cooney/Carey (2003), available at [http://www.dcy.gov.ie/docsdb/documents/des\\_school\\_books\\_ireland\\_cost\\_to\\_parents.pdf](http://www.dcy.gov.ie/docsdb/documents/des_school_books_ireland_cost_to_parents.pdf)

The Society of St Vincent de Paul, [www.svp.ie](http://www.svp.ie) and Barnardos, [www.barnardos.ie](http://www.barnardos.ie) for supplying information on the cost of school books

The National Parents' Council Primary, [www.npc.ie](http://www.npc.ie) for collating best practice in primary schools

The National Parents' Council Post-Primary, [www.npcpp.ie](http://www.npcpp.ie) for assistance in identifying schools with successful book rental schemes

An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta, [www.cogg.ie](http://www.cogg.ie)

The Irish Educational Publishers' Association for the text of the Association's agreed Code of Practice

The primary and post-primary schools that facilitated school visits, convened meetings between school management and school book rental scheme co-ordinators and inspectors, and contributed useful information to drawing up these guidelines:

- Adamstown Community College, Co. Dublin
- Cabinteely Community School, Dublin
- Carnew National School, Co. Wicklow
- Coláiste Bhríde, Carnew, Co. Wicklow
- North Presentation Secondary School, Cork
- Presentation Secondary School, Waterford
- Rushbrooke National School, Cobh, Co. Cork
- Scoil Chaoimhín Naofa, Glendalough, Co. Wicklow
- Scoil Náisiúnta Mhuire Naofa, Kiltale, Co. Meath
- St Joseph's Secondary School, Co. Westmeath



