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Department of Education  
and Youth

# A guide for parents

## Primary Schoolbooks Scheme for pupils in Primary and Special Schools 2026/27



# Introduction

Buying schoolbooks and classroom resources can be a costly expense for parents/guardians. For the past three years schools have been provided with funding to buy schoolbooks workbooks and copybooks for children in primary and special schools.

This leaflet will explain how the scheme is run and provides answers to some frequently asked questions.

## The Primary Schoolbooks Scheme

The Primary Schoolbooks Scheme is a funding scheme where the Department of Education and Youth provides funding to recognised primary and special schools in the Free Education Scheme to purchase schoolbooks, workbooks and copybooks.

Under the scheme, schools buy books in bulk and they own the schoolbooks. The school then provides each pupil with all their schoolbooks on loan at the start of the school year.

This means that parents of primary pupils will not pay towards the cost of schoolbooks, workbooks and copybooks.

## How the scheme operates

The school will provide your child(ren) with the schoolbooks, workbooks and copybooks covered by the scheme. It is important that your child looks after the books carefully because they belong to the school. Pupils are permitted to bring schoolbooks and resources home to complete homework and so that you can stay connected with your child's education.

At the end of the school year your child returns the books to the school in good condition. They must also be returned if your child leaves the school.

## What the scheme covers

Schoolbooks are textbooks (including ebooks) and workbooks used by pupils in schools. It also includes copybooks.

Additional classroom resources can be covered under the scheme if a school has surplus funding. This can include pens and pencils or other items such as dictionaries, mathematical sets or school journals. Schools must provide parents with information on what will and will not be given to pupils.

Full details are available at [gov.ie/schoolbookschemes](http://gov.ie/schoolbookschemes)

## How parents/guardians can support the scheme

Parents/guardians should remind their children that the schoolbooks are on loan from the school. Pupils need to take good care of their schoolbooks and keep them in good condition during the year so that they can be re-used in future years.

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.



# Key Information

## 1. How to take part in the scheme

Parents/Guardians do not have to make an application for this funding. Funding is paid directly to schools.

## 2. Items covered by the scheme

All schoolbooks – this includes all textbooks, including ebooks, and workbooks decided by schools as necessary for each class. Copybooks are also covered by the scheme.

## 3. Other classroom resources covered

Schools may have funding remaining after all schoolbooks, workbooks and copybooks are provided. In this case the school can choose to provide additional classroom resources that parents previously purchased.

## 4. Replacement of lost or damaged books

The issue of replacement of lost or damaged books is a matter for each school to decide. Schools are not allowed to charge a deposit to parents to participate in the Primary Schoolbooks Scheme.

## 5. Items not covered by the scheme

The following items are not covered by the scheme:

- Aptitude tests
- Swimming lessons and other school-based activities, for example, Young Scientist, other competitions
- Cost associated with school trips
- Insurance
- Digital devices
- Items that are funded under another grant (Assistive Technology grant, ICT grant)

## 6. Items for which schools can charge

Schools cannot charge you for schoolbooks, workbooks or copybooks as these items are covered under the scheme.

The school can request a charge for direct costs (photocopying, other additional classroom resources) and optional extras (like trips or extracurricular activities). These are items that are not provided under the schoolbooks scheme (see point 6). Voluntary contributions can be requested by a school but cannot be mandatory and cannot stop the school from providing your child with schoolbooks, workbooks and copybooks.



# Key Information

## 7. How to raise a query with the school

The board of management/ETB is responsible for the running of the scheme in the school. If you have any concerns or queries about the scheme, you should contact your child's school directly.

If you are not satisfied with the response from the school, the school may have a formal complaints process. This can be requested from the school and should be followed when making any complaint. Further information is available at [gov.ie/en/policy-information/parental-complaints/](https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/parental-complaints/)

## 8. Feedback on your experience of the scheme

The department welcomes feedback on parents' experience of the scheme.

Each year a consultation survey is issued by the department to schools to share with parents. Parents can then complete the survey to share feedback on their experience of the scheme. A link to this survey will also be uploaded to the Schoolbooks Scheme Information Hub when the survey is open.

Alternatively, feedback can be provided throughout the year by emailing [primaryschoolbooks@education.gov.ie](mailto:primaryschoolbooks@education.gov.ie)

