Cloontuskert N.S.
Cloontuskert,
Lanesborough,
Co. Roscommon.
N39 AT80.
Roll No. 18116S

Free Book Scheme

Policy

Reviewed: May 2026

Free Book Scheme Policy

Introduction

This policy was established in response to the Department of Education and Youth's Free Book Scheme. Parents are no longer required to make any contribution towards the cost of schoolbooks, including workbooks and copybooks. This policy is published on the school's website and will be made available in hard copy, on request, to any person who requests it.

Rationale

This policy has been established in line with the Department of Education and Youth's 'Schoolbooks Grant: Guidelines for Primary and Special Schools', published in March 2023. Primary schools and special schools will retain the discretion to implement the curriculum by choosing the books and resources that best meet the needs of their pupils. The scheme is operated by the staff of Cloontuskert N.S. on behalf of the Board of Management.

Benefits

There are many benefits for parents, pupils and schools:

- The scheme will remove the annual cost to parents of purchasing schoolbooks.
- Parents will no longer have the inconvenience of buying and covering books.
- All pupils will have access to a wider range of textbooks, with additional class sets provided by the school.
- Standardised editions will be supplied, eliminating confusion over different publications or versions.
- The school will own the books and loan them to pupils.

Operation of the book scheme

All schoolbooks required for each academic year will be selected collectively by the teaching staff. The administration and operation of the book scheme will be managed by staff members.

The scheme will prioritise the provision of free schoolbooks, workbooks, and copybooks. Once these needs have been met, any remaining grant funding may be used to reduce or eliminate the cost of classroom resources and stationery.

Any surplus funding may also be used to purchase shared books, audiobooks, and other materials aimed at enhancing literacy and numeracy within the school. Alternatively, surplus funds may be carried forward to the following academic year. When deciding how to allocate any remaining funds, schools should take into account the potential need to replace or acquire new books in subsequent years.

The Department does not intend to provide a prescriptive list of items to be included under classroom resources. It is recognised that these requirements will vary from school to school.

In general, classroom resources refer to the materials pupils need to complete curriculum-based literacy and numeracy work. Where funding allows, this may include items such as pencils, pens, erasers, sharpeners, colouring pencils, and whiteboard markers.

For pupils in more senior classes, resources may also include dictionaries, mathematical sets, and calculators.

Related classroom resources may also include, where funding permits, items provided by primary schools where a charge was previously levied on parents for example art materials and photocopying.

It is recognised that the total book grant provided may not be sufficient to cover all related classroom resources. Cloontuskert N.S. will clearly communicate with parents regarding which classroom resources are included under the scheme. Where certain required items cannot be covered, parents should be informed of the arrangements in place for the provision of these resources.

The Department also recognises that, in some circumstances, children and young people enrolled in special schools or in special classes within mainstream primary schools may not use standard schoolbooks, workbooks, or copybooks. In such settings, a broader range of educational resources may be required to meet pupils' needs. This may include, for example, the provision of audio versions of schoolbooks alongside printed texts, as well as other appropriate materials tailored to support learning.

Administration of the School Book Scheme

We will undertake the following steps to effectively manage the scheme:

- Compile book lists and required classroom resources from each class teacher.
- Establish and record the total number of schoolbooks, workbooks, and copybooks to be purchased.
- Prepare a detailed budget breakdown.
- Determine which related classroom resources will be covered under the grant.
- Adhere to public procurement guidelines, including obtaining the required number of quotations from schoolbook suppliers and complying with advertising and tendering requirements, where applicable.
- Select suppliers for schoolbooks, workbooks, copybooks, and any related classroom resources, and place orders.
- Liaise with suppliers regarding any issues that arise.
- Verify all invoices against orders placed.
- Check all delivered stock against orders and invoices.
- Arrange suitable storage for all stock.
- Ensure timely payment to suppliers.
- Arrange for protective covers to be placed on schoolbooks to extend their lifespan.
- Put in place an effective system to catalogue books (e.g. labelling or a barcode scanning system).
- Sort books and classroom resources by class groupings, and within classes where appropriate.
- Ensure that all necessary teaching resources and copyright requirements are provided by relevant publishers.
- Maintain accurate financial records.
- Communicate clearly with parents regarding the scheme.
- Cooperate with the Department if selected to participate in the evaluation of the scheme.

Maintenance

- Pupils are responsible for all textbooks issued to them under the book scheme and are encouraged to take proper care of them at all times. Books should be handled with care to ensure they remain in good condition for reuse.
- Parents are also encouraged to promote and support the proper care of schoolbooks at home. Where a textbook is damaged beyond use, the school will make arrangements for its replacement.
- All textbooks will be covered where necessary, and assistance from the Parents' Association may be requested to support this process.
- Each book will be labelled with the pupil's name using a small, designated label. Pupils and parents are asked not to write names or make marks elsewhere on the books.
- The use of adhesive tape (including sellotape) or staples on textbooks is not permitted, as these can damage the books.
- Teachers also play a vital role in maintaining the condition of textbooks by reinforcing good care practices and monitoring their use in the classroom.

Reducing Waste

Cloontuskert National School will make every effort to minimise waste under the scheme. The school will adopt a cost-conscious and sustainable approach when selecting schoolbooks, workbooks, copybooks, and related classroom resources.

Swimming Lessons and Other School Activities

The Primary School Book Grant is ring-fenced specifically for schoolbooks, workbooks, copybooks, and related classroom resources. The cost of swimming lessons or any other similar school-based activities is not considered a legitimate expense under the Free Primary School Books Scheme.

Transfer of Pupils During the School Year

If a pupil transfers to another school during the academic year, all schoolbooks issued under the scheme must be returned to the original school.

The receiving school will then provide the pupil with a full set of schoolbooks, including workbooks, copybooks, and any related classroom resources, in line with what has been provided to other pupils at the beginning of the school year.

Similarly, pupils enrolling in our school during the academic year will be provided with the necessary schoolbooks, workbooks, copybooks, and related classroom resources in line with those issued to other pupils in their class.

Parents Who Do Not Wish to Avail of the Scheme

The primary aim of the scheme is to eliminate the cost to parents of providing schoolbooks, workbooks, and copybooks. However, in the unlikely event that a parent chooses not to

participate, the school will provide the relevant class book list to enable them to make their own arrangements.

In such cases, parents may independently source the required schoolbooks, workbooks, copybooks, and any related classroom resources. The school is not obliged to reimburse any costs incurred, as the parent has opted out of the scheme.

Protection of Copyright

All educational establishments, including primary schools, are required to hold an appropriate licence to copy and reuse content from copyright-protected materials.

This licence is provided by Irish Copyright Licensing Agency (ICLA), which authorises schools to use content in compliance with copyright legislation.

Return of Books

Textbooks are the property of the school and must be returned when they are no longer required by the pupil.

A specific return date will be set each year by the Principal, and all books must be returned to the school by this date.

Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed and updated as necessary, in line with guidance issued by the Department of Education and Youth.

Ratification & Communication

This policy will be presented at the next B.O.M. meeting for ratification and will be subsequently communicated to the relevant parties.

Signed; _____ Signed; _____
(Chairperson of B.O.M) (Principal)

Date; _____