

A GUIDE TO **SCHOOL BOOK RENTAL SCHEMES**



RENTAL SCHEME

The **School Book Rental Scheme** concept was devised to alleviate the costs of purchasing text books for parents and students in both primary and post-primary schools.

Effectively, the scheme “pools” the upfront costs of purchasing books for selected classes or set of curriculum books by amortising both the cost of purchase and depreciation of the books over a set period of time, normally 3 years.

In general, the scheme is administered in each school by the School Principal (or delegated member of staff) in association with the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) through an appointed rental scheme manager.

To help schools and PTAs set up a school book rental scheme, the following comprehensive guidelines have been researched and assembled by Colibri.ie, Ireland’s leading supplier of book covering systems to schools and bookshops. Additional information from schools is welcomed and will be posted to the School Book Rental Scheme page on www.dbcgroup.ie.



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HOW THE SCHEME WORKS

- Books – a mixture of new and second-hand - are owned by the school
- Students hold books for one year or for an examination cycle, must keep them in good condition and return them to the school at year's end for recycling
- Book replacements and decisions to change books are co-ordinated by the rental scheme manager
- If required, rental payments can be made in phased payments.

ADVANTAGES OF A SCHOOL BOOK RENTAL SCHEME

For Parents:

- **Book costs reduced on an ongoing basis – payments can be phased to avoid other back-to-school expenses**
- **Book costs can be spread out at post-primary level, regardless of whether the student is at the beginning of the examination cycle**
- **Avoids book queues**
- **Book changes have no cost implications, as they don't buy books.**

For Teachers:

- **Wider choice of books possible - all students have books at the start of the year**
- **New books can be introduced on a systematic basis**
- **Removes pressure on teachers to emphasise the use of text-books at the expense of other resources, because parents have paid for them**
- **Open learning is more feasible because students do not have to purchase texts**
- **Range of texts can be swapped around among students**
- **Greater communication with parents on book matters and course content.**

For Students:

- **Flexibility to change subjects or move to a higher level without placing a financial burden on parents**
- **Wider range of texts can be used**
- **Greater opportunities of exposure to books for students from families who are not accustomed to the use of books in the home.**

QUICK TIPS ON SCHEME SET-UP

- Phase in the introduction gradually to help alleviate the initial financial outlay. For example, English the first year, Maths the second year etc or select class years that would easily facilitate a pilot test.
- Engage participation of Parents. Instigate a questionnaire to compile views and opinions and any objections or hurdles that may be unforeseen.
- Run a costing and financial model to fund purchase.
- Consider purchasing from previous year students by offering to buy books second-hand from parents who had them prior to the start of the scheme.
- Review the Department grant for school books rental and examine your school's suitability for funding from this resource.
- Implement a book covering system to ensure the longevity of new and existing books. Old or worn books could be easily revived with a fresh new cover each year, saving on replacement costs in future years.

INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Identifying School Needs

- Is the school reviewing its present scheme or considering the introduction of a book rental scheme?
- What are the benefits/drawbacks related to the scheme?
- Have parents/students been consulted?
- Has the Board of Management been consulted?
- Can a pilot project be introduced prior to the full implementation of the scheme?

Budget

- How is the initial capital acquired to buy a stock of books?
- What yearly rental charge is levied?
- Is it the same for all classes/for all students?
- How often is this charge reviewed?
- What procedures are followed if the fee is not paid?
- What arrangements are made for children eligible under the Aid for School Books Grant Scheme?

Implementation of scheme

- Who has overall responsibility for the administration of the scheme?
- What books are included in the scheme?
- Who purchases the books?
- How books are identified – school stamps, label ...?
- Who is responsible for the cataloguing and distribution of books?
- Who is responsible for the covering, repair and replacement of books?
- What system is used to collect the books at the end of the year?
- What procedures are followed if books are damaged or lost?
- What special storage arrangements are in place?
- What happens to the books that are no longer required by the school?

Evaluation

- How often will the scheme be evaluated?
- What criteria will indicate that the scheme has been successful?
- Who will be involved in the review?



SCHEME MANAGEMENT

A textbook fund administrator would need to be appointed and this could be delegated to a deputy head, a senior teacher or a member of the Parent Teachers Association. The appointee would be responsible for the scheme's day-to-day running at the school.

The duties include the following:

1. Identifying new books and class participation
2. Organising the tagging and covering of books
3. Distributing books to students
4. Collecting rental fees from students
5. Requesting additional books when needed
6. Maintaining textbook ledgers
7. Developing a school book policy
8. Instructing students on proper textbook care
9. Collecting books at the end of the year and returning the textbook inventory and re-ordering form
10. Negotiating purchase/volume discounts with booksellers for following year



The senior management team (Principal or PTA) is often responsible for the proper administration and management of the fund.

GUIDELINES FOR OPERATION

1. Parents should be consulted in the first instance in order to get their agreement to the operation of the scheme. The co-operation of parents and school staff is essential to the success of a scheme.
2. The initial capital required to buy a stock of books could be raised through a bank loan and/or through subscriptions from parents who will get future financial benefit from the scheme. A bank loan could be repaid over a short number of years out of the rental income. A membership fee for students joining the scheme for the first time could also be considered.
3. The yearly rental charge should be pitched at a level sufficient to buy additional or replacement books as required and to repay any loan taken out to buy the initial stock of books. This charge should be reviewed on a year-to-year basis.
4. The scheme should be confined to books suitable for re-use. Good quality second-hand books or new books would be bought. In buying books, durability such as the quality of the binding, would be an important factor. Books might be bought from students and past students as well as from local booksellers. Discounts and/or credit terms could be negotiated with booksellers for bulk purchases.
5. The scheme could be administered by a post-holder. Parents and senior students could assist in the cataloguing of the books, applying the school's identification marks e.g. the school stamp, and sorting the books into the individual lots for each student. The required books would be given to pupils on the first day of the school year. Each student would sign a receipt which would be retained in the school. The rental charge and membership fee, if applicable, would have been paid by parents in advance.
6. The books would be returned by pupils at the end of the rental period. Lost or damaged books would be paid for by students/parents.
7. The book grant for necessitous pupils would be used to pay the rental charges and membership fee (if applicable) for such students.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

Schools have overcome a number of issues by using a variety of means:

1. Seed Capital:

- Starting the scheme with second-hand books donated by school-leavers
- Phasing in the rental scheme with a small number of subjects or classes
- Organised book sales
- Fund-raising activities
- Interest-free loans from parents, school management boards or sponsors
- Applying the grant for needy students.

2. Administration:

- Concentrating the workload over the summer months, when ancillary staff have more time available
- Giving responsibility for book scheme to post-holders
- Involvement of student and parent volunteers

3. Storage/Insurance:

- Use of classrooms during summer months
- Distribution of schoolbooks for following year prior to summer holiday
- Use of classrooms made available through reduction of student numbers in more schools.

4. Disparity in class sizes

(leading to sudden increases/decreases in the number of books required from year to year):

- Sourcing of alternative resource material
- Co-operation with other schools in the locality in exchanging books as required.

5. Six Common Failures:

Failures of school book rental schemes can usually be attributed to some common factors:

- Inability to meet interest commitment on seed capital, where borrowed from a financial institution
- Failure to spread the workload
- Poorly-defined school policy with regard to change of texts
- Mistakes in purchasing unsuitable books
- Inability to cope with large-scale curriculum change
- Absence of advice and support from outside agencies

CODES OF GOOD PRACTICE

Codes of good practice, common for all intended users of the book rental method, could help overcome some of these pitfalls, and could include:

- An operating committee involving Principal, teachers and parents.
- An agreement over whether the needy books scheme money can be used for general funding of the rental scheme.
- A bank account in the name of the book scheme, with name and agreed signatories
- Agreement with the school management on storage and insurance.
- A policy to decide which books are not included i.e., table books, workbooks, handwriting books, dictionaries, atlases and books at pre-reading level.
- A buy-back arrangement with the departing senior classes.
- An agreement on whether a membership fee should be paid by students joining for the first time.
- A well-marketed proposal that will win parents and teachers over.
- Consent from the parents by means of circular.
- A time for book collection agreed between Principal, teachers and parents, three days or so before the holidays.
- A collection method where books are collected in bundles from departing students, and on the day of the examination from examination students.
- A policy on reduced rental charges for families with more than one student involved in the scheme.
- An agreement with parents and students that books be taken care of and given reinforced covers where necessary.
- A formal inspection of books on their collection, with parents' and students' assistance in repairing damaged books.
- Agreement with parents over the replacement of books misplaced or seriously damaged by spillage or other mishap.
- An arrangement whereby students are allotted a mixture of new and second-hand books.
- A phased collection of the rental charge if required by parents.
- A good working relationship with a local retailer, in some cases extending to the purchase of recycled books and patrolling the sale of rental stock as recycled books by students.
- An arrangement whereby books are allocated and recorded by the co-ordinator, with help from parents and students.
- A policy whereby timetables and class rotas are made available to teachers in time to enable them to quantify their book requirements for the following year.



Grants and Funding options

Grants

A grant scheme available through the Department of Education & Skills to help with the cost of school books is mainly aimed at students from low-income families and families experiencing financial hardship.

Broadly speaking, students who may be eligible for assistance under the scheme include:

- **Families that are mainly dependent on social welfare payments**
- **Families on low incomes, (for example, those receiving Family Income Supplement, and the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance)**
- **Families experiencing financial hardship because of particular circumstances (for example, where there is prolonged illness of a parent/guardian, addiction problems, etc.)**

(Students who are in the care of foster families under arrangements made by a Local Health Office and those participating in Youthreach, VTOS and Post-Leaving Certificate Courses are ineligible for assistance under the School Books Grant Scheme.)

In the current economic climate, the rental scheme is rising in popularity amongst the general school communities.

The rates for schools in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) programme are higher than those for non-DEIS schools. Payment of funding to be allocated to schools to provide assistance for books can be analysed as follows:

Primary Schools (as of April 2011)

The allocation to schools for books allows an additional per capita funding of:

Allocation to DEIS schools for books	€21
Allocation to non-DEIS schools for books	€11

Post-Primary Schools (as of June 2011)

The additional per capita funding to be provided is:

Allocation to DEIS schools for books	€39
Allocation to non-DEIS schools for books	€24
Junior Certificate Schools' Programme	€60
Transition Year Programme	€95
Leaving Certificate Applied Programme	€151
Physics and Chemistry	€13





Funding

There are five common types of funding for rental schemes in operation:

I. Operated by school, funded by parents

The most popular type of rental scheme is funded by parents, and operated by school personnel. A post-holder, a teacher or ancillary staff take care of the administration and parents provide the seed capital and rental funds.

II. Operated by retailer, funded by parents

Local retailers collect the money from parents, and distribute and order new books to the specification of the school.

III. Operated and funded by parents

In cases where school personnel are reluctant to get involved, parental committees organise the collection, storage, repair and distribution of books, and order books to the specification of the teachers.

IV. Operated and funded by schools from capitation

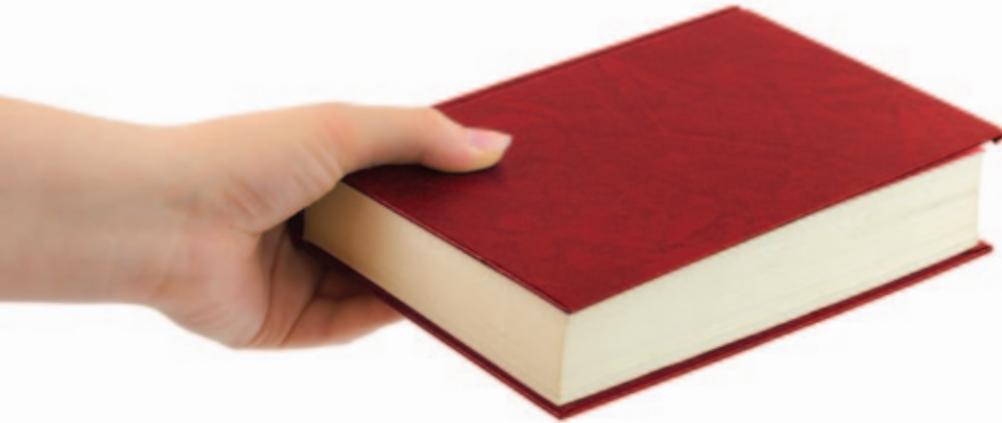
Some schools apply capitation funds to start up rental schemes, where such facility is open to them.

V. Operated and funded by schools from grant

Most rental schemes involve a use of the grant for needy students. While not strictly in accordance with the Department's regulations, the justification is that the rental for needy students could be waived or subsidised and that reducing the book bill benefits needy students in particular.

Terms and Conditions

Should you consider operating a school book rental scheme, here is a brief outline of Terms & Conditions which could be applied:



- 1. The scheme is voluntary. Book lists will be supplied to parents in the normal way.**
- 2. A security deposit of €_____ 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 current year.**
- 3. The security deposit will be held against the safe return of all books rented to students 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.**
- 4. Full compensation for lost books will be required before re-admission to the scheme. However, this deposit will be returned should a student leave the scheme having safely returned all the rented books within an acceptable condition of use.**
- 5. 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.**
- 6. Purchase of workbooks, disposable materials and stationery will remain outside the scope of this scheme and remain the responsibility of the parents.**
- 7. To qualify for admission to the scheme, the deposit and rental charge must be paid on or before 1st X month (June) each year. This deadline is absolute - no late applications will be considered.**
- 8. The Department of Education 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 before X month. If a student 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.**
- 9. Each student/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.**
- 10. Membership of the scheme is at the discretion of the School Principal. Any student found to be abusing, defacing or disposing of rented books will be dismissed from the scheme and will be required to supply their own text books for the remainder of their time in the school.**
- 11. Books supplied under the scheme may be new or second-hand at the discretion of the Principal**

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