



Circular 0032/2017

To: The Managerial Authorities of Recognised Primary, Secondary, Community and Comprehensive Schools and the Chief Executives of Education and Training Boards (ETBs)

Measures to be adopted by schools to reduce the cost of school uniforms and other costs

Introduction

The Minister for Education and Skills has decided to publish measures to be adopted by schools to reduce the cost of school uniforms and other costs. The Minister considers that there is a need to put a greater emphasis on reducing the cost of school uniforms and other costs.

Measures to be adopted by schools to reduce the cost of school uniforms and other costs

The Minister is requesting school authorities to adopt the following measures to reduce the cost of school uniforms and other costs.

Principles of cost-effective practice to be adopted

1. School authorities should adopt the following principles of cost-effective practice which will put a greater emphasis on reducing the cost of school uniforms and other costs:
 - (a) All elements of a school uniform should be purchasable from various stores;
 - (b) Only “iron on” or “sew on” crests should be used;
 - (c) Wherever possible, generic rather than branded items should be specified (e.g. uniform, clothing, IT tablets, sports equipment etc.)
 - (d) Provide parents with a list of all required items and indicate the likely costs of these required items at best value stores;
 - (e) Provide a book rental scheme;
 - (f) Phase out, between now and September 2018, the use of workbooks which cannot be reused and
 - (g) Where an exclusive supply arrangement applies, it should be tendered for regularly.

Consultation with parents

2. Schools should consult with parents on their views and suggestions on cost reduction initiatives. A template questionnaire which would address the principles of cost-effective practice should be sent to parents once every 3 years. Annually, the Board of Management should review the cost of items which they require parents to purchase and this information should be made available to the school community.

Rewarding Schools for adopting principles of cost-effective practice

3. Schools are advised that, as resources permit, it is the intention of the Minister for Education and Skills to reward schools that can provide evidence of having adopted the principles of cost-effective practice. It is intended that this could be done through some premium in capitation grants for schools.

Timeline for implementation

It is recognised that Schools may already have made arrangements for school uniforms etc. for September 2017. Where this is the position, Schools should implement this Circular from September 2017 onwards.

Queries in relation to this circular

Queries in relation to this circular should be emailed to plds@education.gov.ie

Dissemination of circular

A copy of this circular should be provided to members of the Board of Management. A copy should also be provided to the parents association. This circular may be accessed on the Department of Education and Skills website at www.education.ie. An Irish version of this circular is also available on the Department's website.

Tom Deegan

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Parents, Learners and Database Section (PLDS)

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