

Solas Chríost National School

Free School Books Policy

Aims:

- To provide textbooks, workbooks, and copies to the pupils of Solas Chríost National School.
- To ensure, as far as possible, that all pupils will have access to all necessary school textbooks, workbooks and copies from the beginning of the school year.

Background:

As part of Budget 2023, it was announced that primary school children would be provided with all necessary textbooks, workbooks and copies free of charge from September 2023. This Free School Book Scheme is to be built on the existing Book Rental Scheme in the school, which formally came into being at Solas Chríost National School during the school year 2014 – 2015. The Free School Book Scheme is to provide a grant of €96 per pupil in order to cover the cost of textbooks, workbooks and copies.

Administration of the Scheme:

The Free School Book Scheme will be administered by a committee consisting of the Principal, Deputy Principal and In-school management members. This committee, in conjunction with the Free Book Scheme Coordinator will make decisions regarding the Free School Book Scheme on an ongoing basis.

Membership of the Scheme:

Membership of the Free School Book Scheme is open to all pupils attending Solas Chríost National School. No deposit or payment will be required to join the Scheme.

Operation of the Scheme:

Books classifies as:

- Textbooks (cannot be written into and are collect at the end of the school year/when a child leaves the school)
- Workbooks (can be written into and are sent home at the end of the school year/when a child leaves the school)
- Copies can be written into and are sent home at the end of the school year/when a child leaves the school)

Book lists, workbooks, copies and stationery lists will be assembled by the Free School Book Scheme Coordinator following consultation with In-school Management curriculum leaders and the teaching staff in June of each year. After the book lists have been approved by the Principal, the Free School Book Scheme Coordinator will organise and place orders for any required textbooks, workbooks, and copies, subject to funds available. (A Database Inventory will be kept up to date)

The books will be distributed to the relevant classes in advance of the first day of the school year. All books will be covered, stamped and labelled (1A, 2A... for the 'A' streamed class etc.)

Textbooks, workbooks and copies will be given to the pupils on the first day of each school year and at different times during the school year. Pupils will need to have their own stationery materials as per the class booklist. Textbooks will be collected from the pupils in June, and will be checked for loss/damage. All textbooks will remain the property of Solas Chríost National School, but pupils may keep workbooks and copies that have been written into.

Textbooks will be stored over the summer holidays in the relevant classrooms and an up to date inventory will be kept.

Provisions under the Free School Book Scheme:

The Free School Book Grant will cover the provision of all required textbooks, workbooks and copies (and covers) to all pupils in Solas Chríost National School. Any remaining funds will be retained by the school in order to replace books, textbooks and copies in the following year. An account of expenditure will be forwarded to the Department of Education annually.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs:

Pupils who are operating on a differentiated or alternative programme will be catered for under the terms of the Free School Book Scheme.

Ownership of the Books:

Textbooks, workbooks and copies provided under the Free School Book Scheme will remain at all times the property of Solas Chríost National School and may be subject to inspection at any time by a designated member of school staff.

Changing Textbooks and/or Workbooks Currently in Use:

The replacement of textbooks that are currently in use in the school with a new scheme is a costly exercise. Therefore, all changes must be approved by the Principal, and class teachers must agree to use new textbooks for a minimum of five years.

Substituting workbooks currently in use in the school must also be approved by the Principal. No class stream shall be allowed to include additional workbooks on their book list without the prior approval of the Principal.

Stationery:

A list of potential stationery items to be purchased by parents will be listed on the school's booklists. It is recommended that all stationery items are labelled.

Payments from Parents/Guardians

The Free School Book Grant will cover the following:

- Textbooks
- Workbooks
- Copies

Parents/Guardians **will not** be asked to buy textbooks, workbooks or copies.

Miscellaneous Fee: All parents are required to pay €40 annually per child (price reviewed on an annual basis), Art/Crafts, Photocopying, Zip lock A4 Homework Folder, Journal, Extra Readers and, text a parent facility, Interactive Software etc. These are not included under the Free Book Scheme and must be paid for every to meet this expense in the school. Parents of children starting school after January will be charged €30 and children starting after Easter will be charged €20 for this expense.

The Free School Book Grant does not cover co-curricular activities such as swimming, school tours/trips etc. Therefore, as in previous years, parents/guardians will be asked to pay for these activities through Aladdin Connect.

Opting Out of the Free School Book Scheme:

There is no requirement on the part of parents/guardians to take part in the Free School Book Scheme. If parents/guardians do not wish to avail of the Scheme, they will be provided with a book list and can make their own arrangements regarding the purchase of textbooks, workbooks, copies and stationery. The school is not obliged to refund the parents/guardians the cost of such purchases. The **Miscellaneous Fee** will continue to apply.

Lost or Damaged Books

Parents will be charged by the school for lost or damaged books, textbooks and copies. The school reserves the right to exclude any parent from being included in the scheme for the continual loss or damage to books etc.

Leaving Solas Chríost National School Mid-Year:

If a pupil leaves Solas Chríost National School during the school year, all books and any related classroom resources the pupil has been using are to be returned to the class teacher before he/she departs. The books must then be returned to the Free School Books Coordinator and the School's Inventory Database must be updated.

Surplus Grant Money:

Any surplus grant can be used to purchase shared books, audio books and other material to increase the literacy (in English, Irish or other languages) and numeracy resources in a school. Alternatively the surplus can be carried forward to the next school year. Schools should consider the need to replace or purchase new books in the following year when deciding how to use any surplus grant in the current year.

The Department acknowledges that a library of books, audio books and other material to increase the literacy (in English, Irish or other languages) and numeracy resources in a school, can play an important part in a school's teaching and learning. In certain circumstances therefore, the book grant may be used to purchase such resources. Funding should only be used for this purpose where all other schoolbooks, workbooks, copybooks and related classroom resources costs have been met. It is a school's priority to ensure that costs for these items are, in so far as possible, eliminated for families. Where surplus funds remain a school has the discretion to purchase such resources for the school's use.

This Policy will be reviewed annually.

Ratification of the Substance Use Policy

This policy was adopted and ratified by the Board of Management on 14th June 2023

Signed: *Anthony Feeney*
Chairperson of Board of Management

Date of next review: June 2024