



To: The Managerial Authorities of Recognised Post Primary Schools and the Chief Executives of Education and Training Boards

COVID-19 operational supports for the full return to school

1. Introduction

The purpose of this circular is to provide details of the Covid-19 operational supports that will be made available to post primary schools to fully and safely reopen in a sustainable way while minimising risk associated with COVID-19.

This circular should be read in conjunction with the Department's document [‘The Roadmap for the full Return to School’](#) and associated guidance in relation to logistical, curricular and wellbeing arrangements that have been put in place following consultation with the Education Partners, and are underpinned by the Return to Work Safely protocol, and public health advice for the safe reopening of schools.

The following range of COVID-19 operational supports give effect to this guidance, in line with public health advice and provide for hand sanitisation, enhanced cleaning, teachers/SNA substitution, and management supports.

The key public health measures are focused on keeping COVID-19 out of schools and reducing the risk of spread of infection in schools through use of appropriate hygiene and physical distancing measures.

It is important to note that the COVID-19 operational supports outlined in this circular are specifically provided to support schools in minimising the risk of spread of COVID-19.

All grants payments will start in advance of the school year commencing to allow for funds to be made available for schools. Certain grants will be paid in full in mid-August to allow for reopening and others are paid by instalments during the school year (e.g. grant payments based on each school term).

Schools are required to appropriately record costs paid from all grants received. There will be a requirement to report on certain grants paid by instalments to assess the level of grant funding utilised that can be taken into account in subsequent grant payments.

2. A new Minor Works Grant to Post Primary School to Support Full Implementation of COVID-19 Response Plans

The Roadmap for the full Return to School outlines the potential range of measure necessary to reconfigure schools in a way that enables the implementation of the Roadmap, public health advice and each schools' own COVID-19 Response Plan. The measures necessary to enable the full return to school may include, but are not limited to, reconfiguration of classroom space, re-purposing rooms to provide additional space, adapting storage facilities, purchasing furniture, altering desk layouts, adapting toilet areas, short term rental of additional space etc. Given that each school setting is different, individual schools are best placed to decide on the appropriate re-configuration measures for their school necessary to facilitate school re-opening.

To support schools in this work, a once-off minor works grant will issue to all schools in the free scheme by mid-August calculated as follows:

- €10,000 basic grant plus €100 per mainstream student and €400 per student in special classes on the rolls on the 30th September 2019.

The table below provides an illustrative example of the value of the minor works grant for post primary schools of various sizes based on number of mainstream students enrolled only.

School size	Minor Works Grant
200	€30,000
400	€50,000
600	€70,000
800	€90,000
1000	€110,000

Note: Calculations in this table based on no of mainstream students enrolled only

The principles outlined in *Circular 0062/2013 relating to the Grant Scheme for Minor Works to National School Properties*, should also be applied by schools in utilising this Grant, with schools having the necessary flexibility to implement necessary reconfiguration measures in their school in line with the Roadmap for the full Return to School, public health advice on the reopening of schools and their COVID-19 Response Plan.

In limited circumstances, the Department will consider applications from schools where the extent of necessary re-configuration works to enable full reopening is such that additional funding may be necessary. This will be considered on a case by case basis by the Department and contact should be made with the Department at reopeningschools@education.gov.ie

3. Employing an aide to help with school reopening logistics

Schools may employ an aide (s) to assist with the physical and logistical arrangements necessary for school re-opening including movement of furniture, setting up hand sanitising stations, signage, training, engaging with parents and staff etc.

The daily rate payable is €143.32. The table below sets out the number of days applicable based on school size.

Enrolment	No. of Days
<600	15
>600	20

The funding will be provided in the form of a grant payment and will issue to schools in mid-August.

4. COVID-19 Capitation Grant

Schools will receive a COVID-19 Capitation grant to provide for enhanced cleaning and the purchase of necessary supplies of hand sanitiser and PPE for use in the school and classroom.

4.1 Cleaning supports

Funding to support additional cleaning costs will be provided as outlined in the tables below in line with recognised pupil enrolment on 30 September 2019. The grant paid to schools with an enrolment of equal to or less than 200 pupils is based on a minimum enrolment of 200 pupils. Enhanced rates are payable in respect of students attending special classes attached to mainstream schools to assist with the extra costs associated with the cleaning of classrooms with a small number of students, operating specialist provision.

The funding will be provided in the form of a grant paid in instalments, the first of which will issue in mid-August to cover the period to December 2020.

COVID-19 Capitation Grant – rate per pupil	
Mainstream	€33
Special Class	€40

Example of Covid-19 Capitation Grant for Cleaning Costs	
Pupil Enrolment	Value of Grant
Up to 200	€6,600
400	€13,200
600	€19,800
800	€26,400

4.2 Purchase of hand sanitiser and PPE

A drawdown framework has been established to enable schools to purchase necessary supplies of hand-sanitisers and PPE requirements. The procurement process for this framework is well advanced and it is intended that these materials will be available in early August.

The COVID-19 capitation grant will also be the mechanism through which further additional funding will be provided to cater for school costs related to hand hygiene measures and PPE requirements. The funding will be paid in instalments, the first of which will be paid in mid-August to cover the period to December 2020.

5 Increased Management and Staffing Supports

In line with current arrangements, an additional teacher allocation will be allocated to schools in the free scheme based on recognised mainstream school enrolments on 30 September 2019.

5.1 PTR Adjustment of 0.6 WTE

A teacher allocation equivalent to a pupil teacher ratio (PTR) reduction of 0.6 will be allocated based on recognised mainstream school enrolments on 30 September 2019.

This allocation will support the important work of teaching and learning and provide additional teachers needed to support teacher substitution, management of physical distancing requirements by reallocating class timetables in schools to smaller groups class sizes where necessary. These posts will also provide for management supports.

A revised staffing schedule confirming the allocation for PTR Adjustment (COVID-19) will issue to all schools in the free scheme in early August.

5.2 Guidance Provision

An allocation in respect of Guidance Provision (the equivalent of a pupil teacher ratio (PTR) reduction of 0.1) will be provided to support student wellbeing. Schools will have flexibility to consider how best to align this resource allocation within the objectives of the School's Guidance Plan.

A revised staffing schedule confirming the allocation for Guidance Provision (COVID-19) will issue to all schools in the free scheme in early August.

5.3 Posts to alleviate school difficulties for a full and safe reopening

It is recognised that at individual school level, notwithstanding the range of measures outlined above, challenges may remain to allow some post primary school to fully and safely reopen. A teacher allocation will be available to support these schools.

As part of the application process, schools are required to demonstrate how they plan to use an additional allocation to achieve the necessary measures set out in the school's COVID-19 Response plan.

The relevant application form is provided in Appendix 1 of this circular.

5.4 Enhanced Supervision Supports

Additional supervision supports are provided to manage and prevent congregation of large groups of students and ensure the careful movement in a socially distant manner to classes for specialist subjects where it is neither practical nor possible to remain in the classroom.

The level of available funding to schools outlined in the table below is payable at the rate of €105 per pupil by reference to the recognised mainstream enrolment on 30 September 2019. The grant paid to a school with an enrolment of equal to or less than 200 pupils is based on a minimum enrolment of 200 pupils.

The funding will be provided in the form of a grant which will issue in instalments, the first of which will issue by mid-August.

Enhanced Supervision Supports	
Pupil Enrolment	Value of Payment
Up to 200	€21,000
400	€42,000
600	€63,000
800	€84,000

The hourly rates payable to individual teachers/supervisors for additional supervision work are as follows:

	Teacher Hourly Rate	Supervisor Hourly Rate
Pre-1 January 2011 Entrant to Teaching/Employment	€42.08	€21.31
Post-1 January 2011 Entrant to Teaching/Employment	€37.88	€19.18

6. Developing Schools

Schools that are currently in the developing stage, i.e. schools that opened since September 2015, will have the additional supports calculated based on the projected enrolment for September 2020.

7. Department Helpline for schools

For further queries in relation to this circular, please contact the Department's Helpline **057 9324461**.

The helpline is open from 9.15am to 5.00pm daily.

Queries can also be sent by email to reopeningschools@education.gov.ie

Paraic Joyce
School Governance and Teacher Allocation Section

July 2020

**Application for an additional allocation in accordance with
Circular 0046/2020 - COVID-19 operational supports for the full return to school**

Completed application forms may be submitted by email to allocations@education.gov.ie

Part 1 – School details

Roll Number	
Name and Address	
Name of ETB (if applicable)	

Part 2 – Appeal for additional allocation

Additional Hours requested	
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Outline below the reasons for your school’s appeal for additional allocation and provide details of how an additional allocation will be used to achieve the necessary measures set out in the school’s COVID-19 Response Plan.

Note: In line with General Data Protection Regulations personal data of pupils should not be submitted.

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Declaration

I hereby certify that:

- the details completed in this form are accurate and complete.
- the additional allocation received as a result of this appeal will be used for the purposes outlined in Circular 0046/2020.

All Schools Signature _____ Date _____

Principal

ETB Schools Signature _____ Date _____

Chief Executive

(In the case of an ETB school, the signatures of the Principal and the CE are required)