



**An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
Education and Skills**

Circular 0032/2020

To: The Managerial Authorities, Principals and Teachers of Recognised Primary, Secondary, Community and Comprehensive Schools, the Chief Executives of Education and Training Boards.

**GRANT SCHEME FOR ICT Infrastructure – 2019/2020 SCHOOL YEAR
€10m Funding to issue to Primary and post-primary schools**

Introduction and Purpose

As part of the implementation of the *Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020 Enhancing Teaching Learning and Assessment*, funding of €210m for ICT Infrastructure will be distributed to schools over the five years of the Strategy. €110m has issued over the lifetime of the strategy to date. €40m in grant funding has now issued in respect of the 2019-2020 School Year, under terms as outlined in [Circular 0031/2020](#).

This circular provides information concerning the issue of a further €10m under the ICT Grant Scheme, in respect of the 2019-2020 school year. This funding, originally intended to provide for an Additional Funding Programme for Schools, on application, has been brought forward due to current school closures under the public health emergency, and will issue automatically to eligible schools

Schools have now been closed to student since the 13th March 2020 due to the Covid-19 crisis. Schools and teachers have had to engage in new ways to support teaching and learning. Many schools have moved to online classes and assignment of independent work using email, school websites and online tools. Teachers are developing educational resources and using a range of educational platforms to provide work to students and give feedback on homework as well as provide virtual lessons where students can attend remotely.

Many schools have introduced a range of strategies and measures to ensure that the needs of pupils and students, who have limited access to technology, are also factored into the measures adopted to support continuity of learning. However the escalation of restrictions has made the provision of support other than by electronic means increasingly difficult.

A core challenge for schools in delivering distance learning through digital means is the reported lack of access to digital devices for students. This is creating significant complexity in delivering lessons and tasks for some learners.

To address this particular barrier to the continuity of teaching and learning during this public health emergency, it has been decided that the remaining €10m funding under the Digital Strategy ICT Infrastructure Grant for the 2019-2020 will issue automatically to eligible schools to support schools in their efforts to support students and teachers to engage with distant learning efforts.

This funding is particularly focussed on assisting schools to address ICT needs identified in the context of the current public health crisis. This can include the purchase of ICT devices that can be shared with students

who do not have access to devices, essential learning platforms and other ICT infrastructure to support the provision of remote learning. Second level schools are asked to focus on state examination students who may not have access to devices in the first instance. All devices purchased remain the property of the school.

Schools are advised to note that the criteria and terms applying to expenditure of this €10m are as outlined in [Circular 0031/2020](#).

If schools need assistance and advice on accessing appropriate devices and procurement mechanisms they should email e www.pdsttechnologyineducation.ie. Procurement support is also available through the Schools Procurement Unit at www.spu.ie.

Advice and information for schools to support the continuity of teaching and learning can be found on the Department's website at:

<https://www.education.ie/en/The-Department/Announcements/information-for-schools-preschools-and-third-level-institutions-on-the-coronavirus.html>

Queries in relation to the operation of this grant scheme should be addressed to ictpolicy@education.gov.ie.

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Teacher Education Policy – Digital

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APPENDIX:

GRANT SCHEME FOR ICT INFRASTRUCTURE– 2019/20 SCHOOL YEAR

1. Automatic Issue of ICT Grant

- 1) This grant will be paid directly into the school bank account, based on the eligibility criteria outlined. Schools are not required to apply for this funding. As with all exchequer grant-aid, school authorities must be able to provide detailed records on how funding, provided under this scheme, was spent. All expenditure in connection with the scheme must be vouched and schools must be able to prove that expenditure was used on infrastructure allowed under the scheme. Invoices and receipts must be retained in the event of an audit inspection by the Department and/or the Comptroller and Auditor General. It is necessary for schools to keep details of quotations received, invoices, receipts and any other relevant records in respect of all expenditure for a period of seven years. Details of the nature of records to be maintained can be found in [Circular 0031/2020](#) for the €40m grant scheme. Schools, on request, must provide the Department with a written statement of the expenditure of the grant and any remaining balances and other relevant information. If a school closes permanently, any balance held in the account must be surrendered to the Department on the date that the school ceases operation. The Department reserves the right to withhold future payments to schools for non-compliance with any of the terms of this Scheme.
- 2) The ICT infrastructure selected for purchase must be in compliance with the broad list of authorised infrastructure as set out at Section 3 in the Appendix to Circular (link to 40m circular).
- 3) Schools must ensure compliance with Circular: 13/2014, Management of and Accountability for Grants from Exchequer Funds. Please refer to: <https://govacc.per.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/DPER-Circular-13-14-Guidance-Note-and-Reporting-Requirements-1.pdf>.

2. Eligibility and grant rates

All recognised primary and special schools will receive this funding. All Post-primary schools in the free education scheme, will receive this funding in relation to the students enrolled and undertaking post-primary programmes. The funding will issue based on school size, as outlined in the below tables:

Post-Primary

Enrolment ranges	Rate per school non-DEIS	Rate per school DEIS
≤249	€2,600	€2,900
250-499	€7,100	€7,900
500-749	€13,250	€14,600
750 plus	€17,300	€19,100

Primary and special primary schools

Enrolment Ranges	Rate per school non-DEIS	Rate per DEIS school
≤99	€550	€600
100-249	€950	€1,000
250-499	€1,400	€1,500
500-749	€1,900	€2,100
750 plus	€2,700	€3,000

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