

11 August 2015



File Copy

Re: FOI request 2015/234

Dear 

I refer to the request which you made under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 for records held by this body:

“I am seeking records in relation to Back to School costs held by the Department of Education.

In June 2013, the Houses of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Education and Social Protection considered a report prepared by the then TD Aodhan O’Riordan as rapporteur on tackling back to school costs.

The report made various recommendations in relation to voluntary contributions, school books, curricular and extra curricular activities and uniforms.

Is there any documentation in relation to how this document was followed up with schools.

Also, can I get a copy of submissions made to the Department of Education in relation to back-to-school costs in 2014 or to date in 2015 from individuals or from organisations.”

I, Noel Farrell, following consultation with the School Governance Section, Schools Financial Section, the Social Inclusion Unit and the Department Inspectorate as the appropriate sections in the Department of Education and Skills to which such records may exist have now made a final decision to grant your request on 11 August 2015.

You have sought access to the records by means of hardcopy and I consider this an appropriate form of access in this case. Accordingly, a copy of the records is now enclosed. The records are as follows;

1. Guidelines for Developing Textbook Rental Schemes in Schools
2. Submission to the Oireachtas Joint Committee for the 13th November 2013
3. Follow up submission on schools books at a further hearing on June 4th 2014,
4. Reply for PQ 32342/13 on 3rd July 2013

5. Press release announcing moves to cut school uniform costs – 11 November 2013
6. Circular 0063/2015 Reducing Costs to Parents – School Uniforms
7. Circular 0030/2015 Allocation to schools for books

Right of Appeal

You may appeal this decision. In the event that you need to make such an appeal, you can do so by writing to the Freedom of Information Unit, Department of Education and Skills, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1. Your correspondence should include a fee of €30 for processing the appeal. (Payment should be made by way of personal cheque or postal money order to the accountant the Department of Education and Skills/Please note that from 19 September, 2014, the Department of Education and Skills will no longer accept cheque payments from business users in accordance with the Department of Finance Circular 01/2013. For further information regarding payment methods for business users, please email foi@education.gov.ie)

You should make your appeal within 4 weeks from the date of this notification, however, the making of a late appeal may be permitted in appropriate circumstances. A week is defined in the Act to mean 5 consecutive weekdays, excluding Saturdays and public holidays (Sunday are also excluded, as they are not weekdays). The appeal will involve a complete reconsideration of the matter by a more senior member of the staff of this Department.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the above, please contact me by telephone on 09064 83720.

Yours sincerely,


Noel Farrell
Decision Maker