



Initial start up costs for returning to
school.

September 2004.

Survey carried out by North Cork
Money Advice and Budgeting Service.

HOW MUCH IS IT COSTING YOUR FAMILY TO SEND A CHILD BACK TO SCHOOL?

Please use a separate form for each child

	Primary	Secondary
Your child's class (e.g. 1 st , etc)

BOOKS AND OTHER ITEMS YOU INTEND TO PURCHASE OR HAVE PURCHASED

How much will/have schoolbooks cost you for September? €.....

Are you buying schoolbooks? new second-hand or a mixture (please tick)

Is there a schoolbook rental scheme? If yes, how much do you pay per year €.....

Is this included in the schoolbooks cost above or in addition to this cost?

New school bag €..... Copybooks €..... Pencils/biros/maths sets €.....

Anything else (please specify)€.....

CLOTHES

How much have you spent on a school uniform? €.....

Was a full replacement necessary?

Is there a tracksuit as well? What is the cost of the tracksuit? €.....

Is it available in a chainstore or only through the school?.....

Runners €..... Shoes €..... Slippers €.....

SCHOOL CHARGES

If you pay for any of the following, please give cost :

Photocopying €.....per week/ €.....per term/ €..... per year

Art materials €.....per week/ €.....per term/ €..... per year

School tour €.....per week/ €.....per term/ €..... per year

Locker fees Deposit €..... Rental €..... per year

Other, please specify€.....per week/ €.....per term/ €..... per year

SCHOOL ORGANISED ACTIVITIES

Swimming €.....per week/ €.....per term/ €..... per year
Foreign Language €.....per week/ €.....per term/ €..... per year
Music €.....per week/ €.....per term/ €..... per year
Dance €.....per week/ €.....per term/ €..... per year
P.E. €.....per week/ €.....per term/ €..... per year
Drama €.....per week/ €.....per term/ €..... per year
Other, please specify€.....per week/ €.....per term/ €..... per year

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

Is there a voluntary contribution in your school? €.....per week
€.....per term/ €..... per year
Do you avail of voluntary insurance through the school? €.....per week
€.....per term/ €..... per year

SCHOOL TRANSPORT

Do you pay for school transport? If yes, €.....per week/ €.....per
term/ €..... per year

AFTER SCHOOL CHILDCARE COSTS

If you have after school child care costs, what is the cost per child? €.....per week/
€.....per term/ €..... per year

AFTER SCHOOL STUDY/HOMEWORK CLUB COSTS

If you have after school study costs, what is the cost per child? €.....per week/
€.....per term/ €..... per year

***ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OR OBSERVATIONS
REGARDING SCHOOL COSTS***

SCHOOL COSTS SURVEY 2004

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The anonymous Survey asked questions in relation to the **initial cost** of sending a child to school for *September, 2004*.

150 surveys were distributed. Replies to 65 of the surveys were received. The following are the average figures based on the findings received.

Our Survey was based on replies on behalf of 42 primary school children and 23 secondary school children.

**Details and observations regarding the costs are expanded upon overleaf, under separate headings of Primary and Secondary.**

The **average** cost is per child under each of the following headings :

|                                                       | <i>PRIMARY</i> | <i>SECONDARY</i>                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                       | €              | €                                                          |
| Books                                                 | 82.15          | <b>50.00 (with book-scheme)</b><br>100.00 (no book-scheme) |
| Other items purchased<br>(e.g. bag, copybooks, biros) | 37.40          | 72.74                                                      |
| Clothing - Uniform                                    | 112.07         | 156.52                                                     |
| Tracksuits                                            | 26.35          | 73.84                                                      |
| School charges                                        | 34.75          | 36.88                                                      |
| School organised activities                           | 49.28          | 53.75                                                      |
| Voluntary contributions,<br>including insurance       | 36.72          | 52.85                                                      |
| School transport                                      | 12.50          | 34.75                                                      |
| After school childcare costs                          | 50.00          | n/a                                                        |
| After school study/homework<br>club costs             | 6.00           | 56.00                                                      |
|                                                       | <hr/> 447.22   | <hr/> <b>587.33</b> /637.33                                |

The findings in relation to **PRIMARY SCHOOLS** were as follows :

### **BOOKS AND OTHER ITEMS PURCHASED**

School books cost an average of €2.15 per student. Many parents complained of the amount of workbooks for students in junior years. 25% of replies showed that there is a book lending scheme in operation, but this often only applied from 3<sup>rd</sup> class upwards and generally in Irish, English and Religion . A mixture of both second hand and new books were purchased. The average expenses incurred in respect of school bags, copybooks, biros, etc amounted to a sum of €7.40.

### **CLOTHES**

All children surveyed had a school uniform. The uniforms, inclusive of footwear (i.e. shoes, runners, slippers) came to an average cost of €12.07 per child. 55% of children needed tracksuits in addition to a school uniform which increased the cost by €6.35. Only one child was allowed to use their tracksuit as their uniform. Most tracksuits were brought through the school or were only available in selected sport shops.

### **SCHOOL CHARGES**

School charges covered photocopying, art materials and milk supplied to students. These costs varied from €5.00 to €75.00 with an average of €34.75 per student. Parents at the higher end of the scale complained of the increasing costs for photocopying.

### **SCHOOL ORGANISED ACTIVITIES**

Swimming seemed to be popular in many schools, with activities in general costing €9.28 per child. In some of the surveys, the schools had not decided or did not know in September the costs of upcoming activities such as drama, music, dancing, etc.

### **VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS**

There was no clarification as to what exactly the voluntary contributions covered, however some people mentioned that they paid €2.00 weekly towards the upkeep of the school. Insurance was available to or taken up by 50% of the children surveyed costing approximately €8.00 per child. The average cost of voluntary contributions was €6.72.

### **SCHOOL TRANSPORT**

The cost to those who had paid for school transport was €12.50 per child per term.

### **AFTER SCHOOL CHILDCARE COSTS**

Only four parents in our survey replied with regard to after school childcare costs.

### **AFTER SCHOOL STUDY/HOMEWORK CLUB COSTS**

The feedback showed that only one child availed of after school study. It is not known whether the service is not available or whether it was not taken up by students.

The findings in relation to *SECONDARY SCHOOLS* were as follows :

### **BOOKS AND OTHER ITEMS PURCHASED**

The use of the book lending scheme reduced the cost of school books to many students by approximately €50.00. On average students paid €50.00 for the book lending scheme and €100.00 in schools without the scheme. However some parents remarked that book lists had not been finalised and therefore there would be additional costs for those outside the book lending scheme. In 60% of schools using the book lending scheme, it only extended to Junior Cert. A mixture of both second hand and new books were purchased. The expenses incurred in respect of school bags, copybooks, biros, etc amounted to a sum of €72.74.

### **CLOTHES**

School uniforms, inclusive of footwear (i.e. shoes, runners) came to an average cost of €156.52 per child. 1<sup>st</sup> year students needed full uniforms with only 13% requiring tracksuits being an average additional cost of €73.84. From 2<sup>nd</sup> year onwards the biggest cost towards uniforms seemed to be footwear.

### **SCHOOL CHARGES**

School charges which included school journal, technology material, Home Economic supplies, Science supplies, lockers, art materials and photocopying came to an average cost of €6.88 per student. Needless to say these are only the initial costs known to parents in September, there would be ongoing costs throughout the year.

### **SCHOOL ORGANISED ACTIVITIES**

Costs in respect of school organised activities were not known by most students in September. However school tours cost in the region of €450.00 - €600.00 per student, not including pocket money.

### **VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS**

Insurance was available for approximately €8.00 per student. Voluntary contributions ranged from €8.00 to €158.00 per student. It was not clear what was covered by the voluntary contributions.

### **SCHOOL TRANSPORT**

The average cost of school transport came to €34.75 per term. Some students had to use private buses, which charged €2.00 per student per **week** for the first child and €3.00 per student for second children and upwards.

### **AFTER SCHOOL CHILDCARE COSTS**

None of the surveys were completed in respect of after school childcare costs.

### **AFTER SCHOOL STUDY/HOMEWORK CLUB COSTS**

This cost on average was €6.00 per term per student.

## ***OBSERVATIONS AND PARENTS COMMENTS***

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Our Survey covered **only the initial costs** for sending a child to school in September, 2004. It did **not** include any additional costs throughout the school year.

The initial cost of sending a child to primary school averaged €47.22

The initial cost of sending a child to secondary school averaged €87.33 for a student with access to a book lending scheme, €37.33 without a book lending scheme. Parents highlighted the fact that there are many additional costs throughout the school year in Secondary School by comparison to Primary School.

The Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance for September, 2004 was €30.00 for Primary School and €150.00 for Secondary School.

A number of parents remarked upon the increasing costs annually of sending children to school.

Some parents said they found it difficult to budget for school books due to the fact that booklists were incomplete in September. Parents also complained that books are changed from year to year, and cannot be passed on to younger children. It was suggested that schools who organise a sale of second hand books before the Summer holidays hold the sale on children allowance day.

A suggestion was made by one Secondary school parent to have a sale of good, clean uniforms in the school in August. It would appear that a new uniform pants has to be purchased each September. As highlighted in the survey footwear for secondary school students averaged between €0.00 and €30.00.

One Secondary school charged a once off fee of just €5.00 for the use of the locker until the student finished in the school as opposed to an annual charge.

Parents remarked upon the fact that students in the Junior cycle paid €3.00 per term for a seat on the bus, but once the student entered the Senior cycle they had to pay €1.00 per term for the same seat on the bus. It was also felt that students doing after school study should be allowed half ticket fares as they are collected by parents after bus hours.