- Encouraging the school's board of management and parents' association to consider the need to keep changes of textbooks to a minimum each year
- Volunteering to assist the working group operating the book rental scheme; for example...
  - by helping to cover the books in the rental scheme before the beginning of the school year
  - by sorting, tagging and checking books before they are distributed to students
  - by making up sets of books for distribution to students
  - by helping to check in returning books at the end of the school year
  - by helping to clean and repair returned books used in the rental scheme
  - by assisting the working group with collecting and accounting for rental fees from students and their parents
- Donating good quality, up-to-date second-hand books that you bought but that your child no longer needs to the school for use in the rental scheme
- Offering to assist at fundraising events or to organise sponsorship to help raise funds for buying new books
- Sharing your experience of participating in the book rental scheme with the school community in other schools where rental schemes may not be operating – your advice and experience could be invaluable in helping them to get started.

The guidelines have been written with the assistance of a number of schools and organisations, including the National Parents' Council-Primary, the National Parents' Council-Post-Primary, the Society of St Vincent de Paul, Barnardos and the partners in education.

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A Guide for Parents
Textbook Rental Schemes
in Schools

Introduction

Buying textbooks is a very heavy cost for parents. Joining a textbook rental scheme in your child's school is one way in which you can reduce this cost greatly.

Many schools operate very successful rental schemes. Many parents are strong supporters of textbook rental schemes.

This leaflet will explain how a textbook rental scheme could help you and your child.

What is a textbook rental scheme?

Textbook rental schemes loan textbooks to children and charge a small rental fee. The books are owned by the board of management of the school and are rented out each year to students. Many schools run textbook rental schemes.

The cost of renting the books from the school is much lower than buying the books in a bookshop. Usually the schemes cover conventional textbooks, but in some schemes electronic books and/or readers are included.

How do the schemes operate?

Before the beginning of the school year, you pay the rental fee to the school (and sometimes a small deposit). The textbook scheme will cover many but not all textbooks. The school principal will tell you what's covered and what books you will still need to buy.

When your child comes to school, the teachers will give him/her the textbooks covered by the scheme. Your child uses the books for the school year. It's important that your child looks after the books carefully because they belong to the school.

At the end of the school year, your child returns the borrowed textbooks to the school in good condition. If you paid a deposit, this is given back to you.

How can I help the book rental scheme in my child's school?

Book rental schemes work best when they are supported fully by everyone at the school. You can help in many practical ways to set up or run a textbook rental scheme in your child's school. Generally, schools are delighted to get offers of help to run textbook rental schemes. Sometimes the scheme is set up by the school in co-operation with its Parents' Council or Association.

Before your child goes to school, you can:

- Ask the school if it has a book rental scheme when you apply to enrol your child in the school
- Tell the school that you would like to take part in a book rental scheme if they have one available
- Participate in the book rental scheme when your child begins attending the school
- Pay the required deposit and rental fee promptly (for children entering junior infants in primary schools and first year in post-primary schools, the fee and deposit are usually paid in the term before your child comes to school for the first time - often in the April, May or June before the beginning of the school year).

If your child's school has a book rental scheme, you can:

- Apply to have your child participate each year in the book rental scheme
- Pay the required deposit and rental fee promptly (usually in the term before the beginning of the school year)
- Impress on your child that the books need to be looked after carefully: encourage your child not to write on the books
- Ensure that your child returns the borrowed books promptly at the end of the school year
- Share your experience of the book rental scheme with other parents who may not be aware of the benefits of the scheme.

You can help to support the organisation of the book rental scheme in your child's school by:

- Suggesting to the principal of the school or a member of the school's board of management or parents' association that establishing a book rental scheme would be a good idea
- Helping to create an awareness among parents and the parents' association of the benefits of book rental schemes; for example, a good idea might be to invite a speaker from another school where a book rental scheme operates successfully to speak at a parents' association meeting
- Contributing to any working group that the board of management may establish to help set up or run a book rental scheme
- Complying with the rules that are set down for the operation of the rental scheme