



Circular: M14/05

To: Management Authorities of Second Level Schools

Revised scheme of grants towards the purchase of equipment for pupils with a disability.

This circular replaces circular M11/95.

Purpose of the scheme – who is covered?

1. Provision has been made for a scheme of grants towards the purchase of equipment for the use of pupils in second-level schools who have been diagnosed as having serious physical and/or communicative disabilities of a degree which make ordinary communication through speech and /or writing impossible for them. Following the establishment of the National Council for Special Education all applications for special equipment must be submitted by school management authorities to the Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) with assigned responsibility for the school.

What is provided?

2. The purpose of the grant-aid is to provide the pupils in question with equipment of direct educational benefit to them. Examples of such equipment include computers, word processors, tape recorders, software etc. The rate of grant in respect of any pupil will be the cost of the equipment, subject in general to a maximum grant of €3,800.
3. In relation to pupils with Visual Impairment (VI) and Hearing Impairment (HI) the Visiting Teacher Service assesses and gives advice to the SENO in relation to equipment commonly used e.g. technology, large print, tapes, brailers, audiology equipment etc. The SENO will take account of the Visiting Teacher's recommendations when considering applications for equipment for such pupils.

Professional assessments and documentation required

4. Supporting documentation must be submitted to the SENO when making the application. This should include a recent comprehensive and professional assessment of the nature and extent of disability, and details of the equipment most appropriate for the needs of the pupil. It may involve a psychological assessment, occupational therapy report, physiotherapy report and/or speech/language report.

Criteria for providing grants

5. Applications for equipment are considered on the basis of the following criteria
 - a. that the professional who assesses the child has made a recommendation that assistive technology is necessary for the effective education of the child, including illustrating how the equipment will be used. (An assessment indicating that equipment would be beneficial, desirable or useful will not be sufficient since this could be true in the case of any child.)
 - b. That the case is made/ evidence supplied that the child will need the recommended equipment throughout the school day. (Some children may, for example, require the use of a computer only for a short period during the day – such a requirement should be met from within the IT resources already available within the school.)
 - c. That it is clear that the existing equipment in the school is insufficient to meet the child's needs without unduly depriving other children of access to the equipment.

Applications procedure

6. On receipt of an application from a school, the SENO will examine the application in the light of the needs of the pupil, the school facilities and the criteria set out in this circular. Following this process the SENO will decide whether to recommend that grant aid to be made available to the school by the Department of Education & Science. The SENO will recommend the equipment that should be provided.
7. On receipt of an application and recommendation from the SENO, the Department of Education and Science will advise schools on the level of grant approved, subject in general to a maximum grant of €3,800. Schools must await the approval of the Department before purchasing equipment. After purchase, receipted invoices must be submitted with claims for payment and copies retained in the school account.

Who will be responsible for the equipment?

8. The equipment will be the property of the school. The school's management authority will have responsibility for maintenance, repair, insurance etc. of the equipment. The management authority will ensure safe custody and careful handling of the equipment. A designated teacher in the school should take responsibility for the management of the equipment and for monitoring its effective use within the school. Equipment purchased should normally be kept in the school. However, the pupil in question may, with the consent of the management authority, use the equipment at home.
9. Although the equipment will be sanctioned for a particular pupil the equipment will, as a rule, remain the property of the school and will be available for allocation to subsequent pupils with similar disabilities. Where the school has no further requirement for the equipment or where a pupil transfers to a different school, the SENO may allocate it to another school in the interests of meeting needs to the greatest extent possible.

Returning the completed forms – to where?

10. Please return completed applications to the SENO attached to the school. A notice has issued from the NCSE to schools giving contact details for the SENO attached to each school. If for any reason your school has not received this information notice, contact may be made with the NCSE at 1-2 Mill Street, Trim, Co. Meath; Telephone: 046 9486400; Fax: (046) 9486404.

Brigid Mc Manus,
Secretary General.

18 February, 2005.

Application Form (M14/05)

- 1 **Name/address of School** _____

2. **Roll number** _____
3. **Telephone No.** _____
4. **VEC (if relevant)** _____
5. **Name of Pupil** _____
6. **PPS No. and Date of Birth** _____
7. **Year of pupil** (e.g. Year 2, Junior Cycle) _____
8. **Nature of Disability** _____

9. **Assessment attached** _____
10. **Equipment for which grant is sought** _____

11. **Estimated Cost** € _____
12. **Name of SENO:** _____

I declare that the particulars given above are accurate, that the application is in conformity with the terms of Circular M14/05, that a report of a recent comprehensive assessment is attached and that assistance in the use of the equipment will be provided by the school.

Signed: _____
Manager/Principal/Chief Executive Officer **Date:** _____

Please return application to the SENO assigned to the school.

Recommendation: to be completed by the SENO.

Signed: _____
SENO **Date:** _____