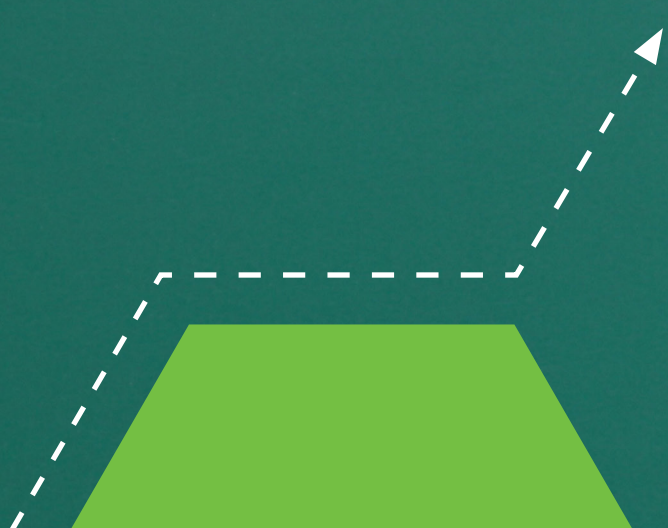




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The Real Cost of School *in 2023*

Back to School Survey - Briefing Paper
August 2023




Barnardos
Because childhood lasts a lifetime

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Introduction

“School in Ireland is meant to be free but the cost every year is almost impossible to meet and getting more expensive each year.” - Secondary school parent

All children have a right to free education in Ireland, guaranteed by the Irish Constitution. In reality, there is substantial financial cost when sending a child to school, meaning access to education is anything but free.

Every year, for 18 years, Barnardos has highlighted the costs incurred by parents in preparing their children to return to school each September, reporting on the pressures parents are directly experiencing to cover back to school costs.

In Budget 2023, the Government took the progressive step to provide free schoolbooks to all primary school students. Despite this development, expenses remain high for parents. It is shameful and unjust that any child should grow up in a household experiencing severe financial pressures, struggling to afford something so fundamental as education. Now is the time to build on last year’s momentous step and set out plans to provide a truly free education to all children in Ireland.

Barnardos calls on the government to prioritise the following four steps:

- 1. Provide free schoolbooks to all secondary children**
- 2. Make it mandatory that all schools have an option of a low-cost uniform**
- 3. Maintain Back to School Footwear and Clothing Allowance, increase and expand thresholds, and extend Child Benefit**
- 4. End voluntary contributions**

Methodology

Each year, Barnardos undertakes an online survey of parents to find out the costs they will incur for their child(ren) returning to education in September. A link to the survey is shared with the public and our supporters¹ through various channels, including the media, email and social media. This year the survey was live from the 19th June to the 10th July inclusive. Over 1,100 responses were received. These responses represent the costs associated with 629 primary school pupils and 519 secondary school students. The costs examined in the survey are essentials required for returning to school, such as schoolbooks, school uniforms, digital technology and voluntary contributions.

Profile of parents

Our analysis shows that responses to the survey came from a cross-section of Irish society, with a representative geographic spread. Respondents covered all classes and years within the primary and secondary school cycles.

- The majority of survey respondents described themselves as being mothers (92%), while 6% described themselves as being fathers, 1% described themselves as being grandmothers and an additional 1% were other relatives or carers.
- 21% of parents said they were in receipt of the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance.
- Parents from every county across the country responded to the survey, with approximately half (58%) describing themselves as living in urban areas and the remaining 42% living in rural areas.
- Two thirds of parents (68%) were either in full time or part time work. Just under one in five (12%) described themselves as homemakers, 5% as full or part-time carers, 2% as unable to work, 2% as students and just under 3% as being unemployed.
- 69% of parents said they were married, 9% were cohabiting with partners and just under 16% were lone parent families.
- The children of the parents who responded to the survey attended an even mix of all school classes and years across primary and secondary school, and attended the full range of schools, with approximately 13% in (DEIS) schools.
- Approximately 40% of parents said they had two children in school, 35% had one, 20% had three, 4% had four and just over 1% had more than four children in school.

¹ Individuals who have agreed to receive information from the organisation.

Back to School Costs

“Yes it’s meant to be free education, but it will cost me €700 - 800 and I’m very worried and stressed about it all as a single parent.” - Secondary school parent

“Costs are always horrendous and always a huge strain in my house.” - Secondary school parent

“This year costs will almost break me” - Primary school parent

Every year, parents across the country face substantial costs to get their children ready to go back to school. Below, we highlight the main costs involved and outline parents’ views and experiences on trying to meet them.

It is clear from our survey results that parents are concerned about meeting costs this summer. Half of primary (50%) and two-thirds of secondary school parents (66%) stated they are worried about meeting costs this year, (14% of primary school parents and 27% of secondary school parents said they were very concerned). Only one in four (26%) of secondary school parents said that costs were manageable. Worryingly, 2% of primary and 7% of secondary school parents said they simply would not be able to meet costs.

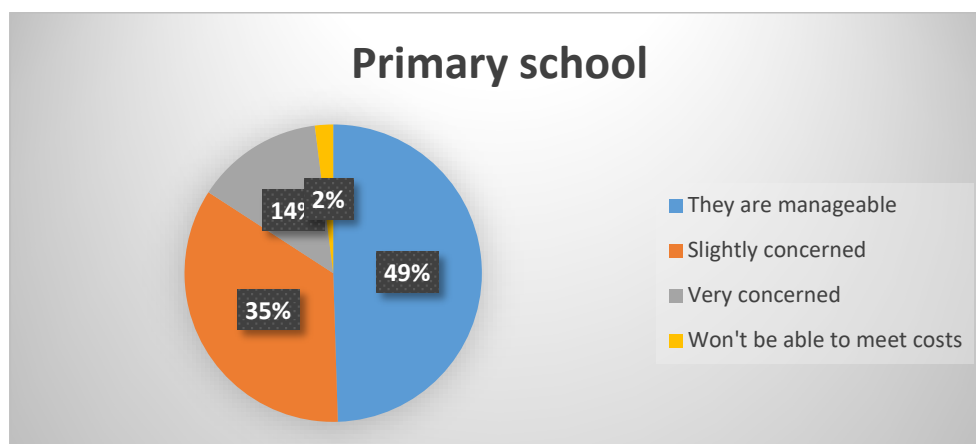
“I just don't know I'm going to meet the expenses. I'm so worried, my children will be without” - Primary school parent

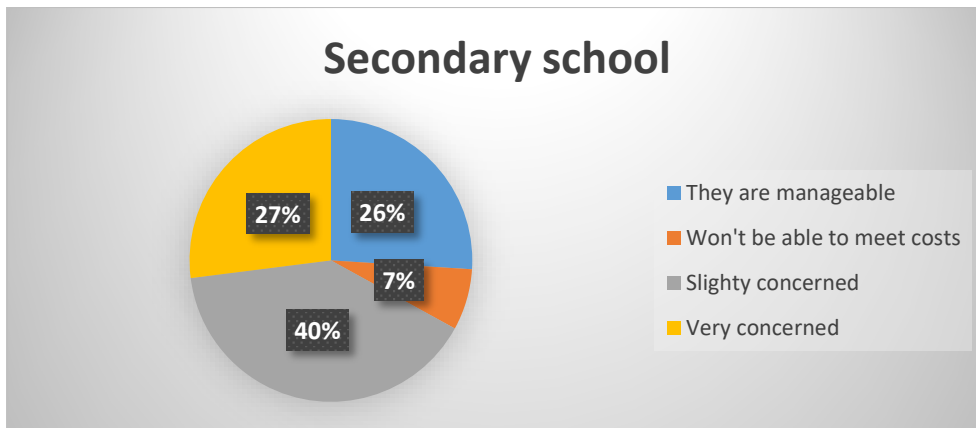
“It costs me nearly €2000 to send 3 secondary school children back to school. It is absolutely disgraceful and is crippling.” - Secondary school parent

Lone Parents

The survey findings show that lone parent families are particularly struggling with back to school costs. Only 7% of secondary school lone parents said that costs were manageable, compared to 26% of overall secondary school parents. Similarly, 35% of primary school lone parents said they were very concerned about meeting back to school costs, almost treble the overall number of 14%.

Graphs 1 and 2. How do you feel about meeting back to school costs this year?





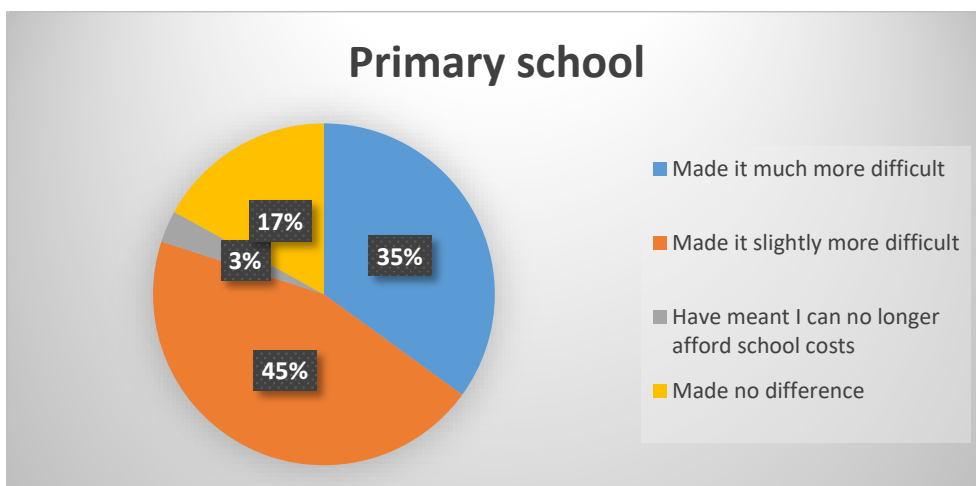
Cost of Living

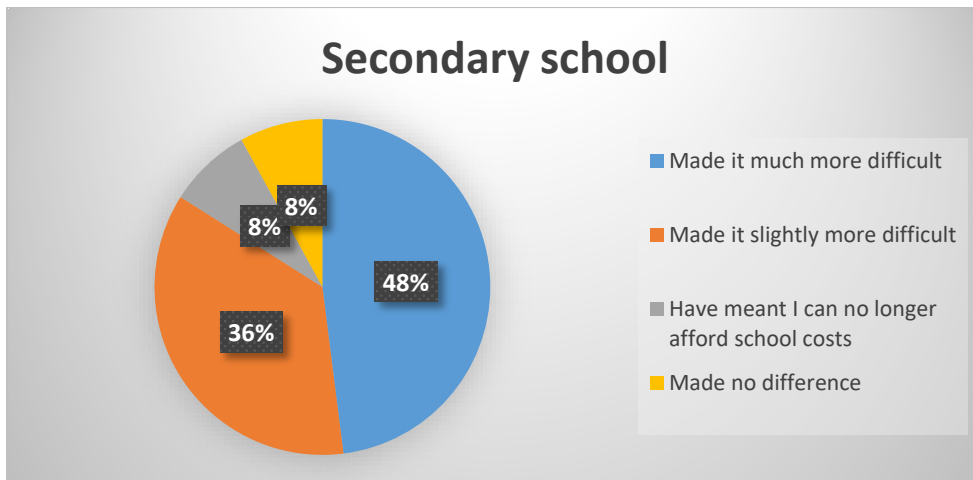
“I find it difficult to provide all school costs. The tablet and schoolbooks alone costs €700. The total costs will be around €1300. We just about managed with this because we paid for the tablet gradually during this year before the start of school. But now the school uniform and tracksuit will clear our budget for August.” - Secondary school parent

One third of primary school (35%) and half (50%) of secondary school parents suggested that cost of living increases have made it much more difficult to meet costs, with a further two-fifths of parents (41%) saying it had made it slightly more difficult. 3% of primary and 8% of secondary school parents said the increases now mean they will no longer be able to afford back to school costs for their children. Only 17% of primary and 8% of secondary school parents said it had made no difference at all.

“With the high cost of bills, it’s getting harder to try and save for back to school cost.” - Secondary school parent

Graphs 3 and 4. Have recent increases to cost of living made it more difficult to afford back to school costs?





Cost of living increases continue to place considerable pressure on families' ability to meet back to school costs.

'It is very difficult and such a stressful time, the school requires both crested tracksuit and crested uniform with black shoes and trainers for tracksuit days. I lie awake in bed with anxiety thinking how will we meet the uniform needs along with the grocery bill. We both work, me part time, we have eaten through our savings since January due to the rise in the cost of living for everything. It's a very worrying time in our lives with another child joining primary school in 2024 and wondering how will we cope?' - Primary school parent

Paying for Costs

"Public education should be free, this year I have to pay €190 registration fee plus €150 for a "voluntary" contribution, plus a uniform with a logo that costs 3 times more and book fees multiplied by 3 children as a single parent who doesn't qualify for any help from government. It is so upsetting, I'm struggling to cope with my financial expectations." – Primary school parent

"I'm seriously under pressure, sleepless night with no help from anybody." - Secondary school parent

"The cost of back to school is always a daunting time that compounds stress." - Primary school parent

Average cost of school essentials for parents in 2023

Costs for parents 2023 - €	4 th class	1 st year	5 th year
Uniforms	121	226	208
Books	0	232	234
Digital books/subscriptions*	-	131	97
Digital tools	47	173	104
Classroom resources*	56	71	72
Voluntary contributions*	96	139	148
Total	320	972	863

* Average amount of those asked to pay classroom resources, digital subscriptions and voluntary contributions.

Comparison of 2023 average costs vs 2022 average costs

Costs for parents - €	2023	2022
Uniforms		
Primary	€117	€117
Secondary	€204	€194
Voluntary contribution		
Primary	€101	€81
Secondary	€143	€124
Schoolbooks		
Primary	€0	€110
Secondary	€218	€207
Classroom resources		
Primary	€51	€45
Secondary	€71	€64
Digital Costs		
Primary	€48	€46
Secondary	€147	€121

We asked parents how they planned to meet back to school costs this year. One in five stated they will have to go into their savings (19%). 6% of primary and 14% of secondary parents will either get a professional loan or need to use a credit card, while a further 4% of primary and 10% of secondary parents will have to borrow from friends and family. Therefore, one in four (24%) secondary school parents cannot afford back to school costs without borrowing. Parents reported on the considerable stress they feel as a result of trying to come up with the money.

“It's frightening the worry has already started to how we will manage financially with all the school costs” - Primary school parent

“Yes, it is extortion [...] and August I always feel is a nightmare month when anxiety levels hit through the roof about how I'm going to pay for everything” - Primary school parent

How will you pay for back to school costs?

How will you pay for back to school costs	Primary school	Secondary school
Out of normal budget	79%	68%
Savings	20%	25%
Borrowing from friends and families	4%	10%
Credit cards or loan	6%	14%
Back to school clothing and footwear allowance	13%	15%

“Secondary school costs this year are a huge stress, three in school, 1st, 2nd and 4th year.” - Secondary school parent

“Myself and husband are living pay cheque to pay cheque and the two children we have will cost in excess of €1000 returning to school.” - Primary school parent

“Secondary has been a huge jump. Now I've such a huge increase to spend and although we got extra 100 euro in back to school allowance the tablet alone required cost nearly double that so will have to borrow off others/ major cutbacks to afford his basic essentials to access education.” - Secondary school parent

Barnardos believes that no parent should be placed under additional financial pressures, borrowing money and ending up in debt to meet costs that children should be entitled to for free. The Government has an opportunity to do more to reduce costs for parents, relieve financial pressures and better ensure all children and young people return to school in September with all their school needs met.

“This year I already know I can't afford new school shoes. I will have to rely on second hand uniform which I have never had to do before.” - Secondary school parent

Uniforms

One of the biggest costs facing parents are school uniforms. We know from our services that many parents are currently struggling to provide children with suitable clothing².

On average, primary school parents spent €117 on uniforms and secondary school parents spent €204 this year. The vast majority of parents, 72% of primary and 76% of secondary school parents, felt costs had gone up from last year, with almost one quarter suggesting it was by €25-50 (20% of primary parents and 25% of secondary parents). Less than 2% of all parents said there had been a decrease.

Most parents stated that uniforms prove so costly due to the requirement to purchase crested/branded uniforms. 75% of primary school and 93% of secondary school parents who responded said their children had to wear crested/branded uniforms. Only 15% of primary and 1% of secondary school parents said their children had plain uniforms and 10% (primary)/7% (secondary) said their child had no uniform. Parents repeatedly suggested that schools should be providing generic uniform options with no crests, or iron on crests. They felt this would allow them to buy more reasonably priced, non-branded options in a wider choice of stores, and if necessary, they could then iron on a crest purchased from the school.

“My child's uniform is very nice but unfortunately the crest makes the uniform more expensive to buy in the assigned shop. The same uniform in other shops without the crest is much cheaper. The crest that is sewn onto the school uniform I think should be removable.” - Primary school parent

“If I could change one thing it would be to get rid of crested uniforms.” - Primary school parent

“Kids should be able to wear generic brand instead of crested.” - Secondary school parent

“An iron on crest for school polo or navy jumper would make a big difference.” - Primary school parent

Additionally, many parents stated they had to buy a crested or specific tracksuit for school on top of a uniform. They submitted that this was an unnecessary additional cost. Some parents urged that schools should decide between one and the other.

“While the uniform isn't crested, the tracksuit is. The tracksuit top alone is €56. Generic affordable uniform across the board would be ideal.” – Primary school parent

“I would prefer if schools just had tracksuits as a uniform instead of having to purchase both.” – Primary school parent

For secondary school parents, the issue of crested or specific school coats was raised frequently.

“Allow to wear ordinary coats with the uniform. I mean why does the child need an extra coat for school only?” - Secondary school parent

² We know from a survey earlier this year we carried out that 43% of parents have said they and their children have had to cut back on clothing costs over the first six months of this year due to cost of living increases. [Cost of Living Crisis 2023 - Barnardos](#)

“Stop forcing kids to buy school coats at ridiculous price. Everything else costs so much. Parents have enough to be buying without dealing with coats.” - Secondary school parent

Parents mentioned the fact that children often need two sets of uniforms, in case one needs to be washed. They also stated that they may have to buy a new, bigger uniform during the school year as children grow so fast. An expensive uniform becomes very difficult to afford in this situation.

“It's the replacement of uniform items, particularly footwear, and having to have at least two of every clothing item at all times is particularly costly. Children this age are growing so quickly, my son in particular goes through a pair of shoes every couple of months as wears the toes out of them. Trousers and jumper dirty almost every day. I want to send my child to school in correct uniform, presentable and looking well cared for but costs in replacing bits run throughout the entire school year.” - Primary school parent

When asked about whether or not they were worried about meeting the cost of uniforms this year, 84% of primary school parents said they were worried (31% very worried) and 91% of secondary school parents expressed worry (46% were very worried). Only 16% (primary) and 9% (secondary) of parents said they were not worried at all.

“Schools should offer a more affordable uniform options which are more available at more affordable shops. The pinafores for my daughters school are only available at a local shop and prices for one piece are €30 and upwards.” - Primary school parent

In 2017, the Department of Education recommended, through a Circular, that schools should reduce the costs associated with uniforms by opting for iron or sew on crests on school uniforms and wherever possible, requiring generic rather than branded items, including uniforms. Unfortunately, too many schools continue to fail to implement this recommendation. In many instances, parents reported that schools knew of the Circular but were choosing to ignore it.

“Our school is changing the uniform for the second time since my child started in 2019. The new uniform is branded only, while there was a generic version of the old uniform. I've informed the school of the Circular on this issue, but they refuse to address the issue, telling me it is my 'opinion' that no generic version is against the Circular. I have no comeback, or place to go to highlight this issue. The government need to take control of schools doing what they like on uniforms” - Primary school parent

“Our school and the Principal are trying to introduce crested uniforms - it is a struggle to be heard to leave it as is - generic ones with an optional crest. The minority need a voice! It needs to come from the Department of Education.” - Primary school parent

No child should live in a home in which parents are struggling to afford uniforms, on top of daily necessities. Several parents suggested introducing a cap in relation to the maximum amount a uniform can cost.

“Uniform costs could be capped to stay within a maximum threshold.” - Secondary school parent

“The Government should mandate the use of plain school uniforms.” - Secondary school parent

Many parents responding to the survey suggested their children's schools were out of touch with financial struggles when it came to uniforms.

“All together everything. Last year they introduced PE uniforms and they are €90. For someone on a very low income who is unable to work, that is a lot of money. No need for that. Or the school could be more sensitive to people like us. Because my children are missing so much stuff they need due to school and living expenses.” - Secondary school parent

Back to School Allowance

The Department of Social Protection provides support to help with the cost of sending children to school through the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance (BSCFA). This allowance is available to families on a low income, such as those in receipt of a social welfare payment (including Working Family Payment) or taking part in approved employment schemes and recognised education and training courses. Each year, hundreds of thousands of children benefit from the BSCFA. It is a vital benefit parents receive to help them meet the costs of the school year ahead.

This year, the Government announced there would be a once off increase of €100 to the BSCFA. This increase was an extremely welcome step from the government, acknowledging the difficulty some parents are facing and the need for additional support for those on low-incomes to meet back to school costs. It will make a real practical difference to families across the country. However, of the parents who completed the survey, 21% said that they receive the allowance and almost two-thirds of those receiving the allowance said it was insufficient to cover costs (64%). It is clear there is a need for the increase to be made permanent going forward.

A significant amount of parents suggested the threshold for receiving the allowance should be lowered, stating that they were struggling to meet school costs but weren't entitled to any state support, as their incomes were too high, or they were not in receipt of a state welfare payment. Many respondents argued that the allowance should be seen as a universal support.

“Back to school allowance should be available to all families as a one-off payment with children's allowance in August regardless of household income.” - Secondary school parent

“Give The Back to School Allowance (reasonable amount) to every family in Ireland.” - Secondary school parent

“Expand the income brackets for back to school allowance.” - Secondary school parent

Some parents suggested that, if the Back to School Allowance is not expanded, there should be some form of additional Child Benefit payment for families during the summer to help them address back to school costs.

“Double Child Benefit for August each year.” - Primary school parent

“There should be extra children's allowance for the summer months, to help prepare for back to school.” - Primary school parent

For some parents, the transition from primary to secondary can bring about increased costs, and there were thoughts on the need, at a minimum, to provide a payment for these years.

“The costs are particularly high for pupils entering school for the first time or transitioning between primary/secondary or junior cycle/senior cycle. A Government support targeted at these

points of a child's education would help ease the burden of cost on parents.” – Secondary school parent

One point that was raised on numerous occasions by parents was the struggle they faced and the increased financial pressure that resulted from Child Benefit ending when children reached age 18, even for those who are still in school. Parents said that it was a substantial hit to their finances and ability to meet back to school costs.

“Continue to pay child benefit as long as the child is in secondary school education even when over 18.” - Secondary school parent

“They should also look at ensuring the child benefit is paid for 18 year olds if they are still in school. When we lose the CB [Child Benefit] and they are still in school it is a huge loss especially as it will be during their final year and that is when more fees are due.” - Secondary school parent

“Also, child benefit should be paid to all children still in school even after 18 yrs. To lose that extra financial support when your child turns 18 is a massive financial loss.” - Secondary school parent

Schoolbooks and Classroom Resources

Barnardos welcomed the announcement of free schoolbooks to all primary school children in Budget 2023. Parents themselves repeatedly stated what a welcome measure it was. However, Parents consistently responded that the free schoolbook scheme should be extended to secondary schools. The average cost of schoolbooks in 2023 for secondary school is €218.

“Free schoolbooks for secondary school children would help!” - Secondary school parent

“The new primary school book scheme is great. Secondary though is financially difficult, very expensive books.” - Secondary school parent

“The free books for primary school is good help, should be for secondary schools too.” - Secondary school parent

“The government should expand the free books to all levels of education.” - Secondary school parent

Some schools provide book rental schemes for their pupils and students³. While this is a welcome support, not all secondary schools run book rental schemes. In 2023, less than half of parents of secondary school students (44%) had such a scheme in their school. Of those who do have access to a book rental scheme, over half (56%) said they had to contribute more than €100 to the scheme for their child.

One of the biggest frustrations that parents expressed regarding secondary schoolbooks was the constant updating of texts and introduction of new editions, meaning they cannot be handed down to siblings or purchased second hand as easily. Parents felt this was a waste of money and very damaging to the environment.

³ Funding provided under the School Book Grant Scheme enables schools to run such rental schemes or else distribute funding, at their discretion, to those they feel are most in need through the provision of book vouchers or cash.

*“Stop ridiculous versioning of books so they can be passed down and reused by multiple children.”
- Primary school parent*

“Stop bringing out new editions of books, such a waste.” - Primary school parent

“The constant change of books is absolutely ridiculous.” - Primary school parent

“There should be a big push to stop changing the revision of the books. Often it’s just one page which will change and the old ones cannot be passed on.” - Secondary school parent

“Limit the number of editions publishers can make on schoolbooks. I have three children in secondary school and none of their books can be shared due to new editions which need to be adhered to, so all children in the class are on the same page. These books cost on average €25-30 each, not only is it a financial waste but an environmental waste.” - Secondary school parent

Some parents were exasperated with the issue of having to purchase workbooks for their children that then go unused, saying both the price and environmental impact was wasteful.

“Also, the use of workbook type books does not allow them to be reused. This is also environmentally damaging. This is a publishing issue which is not addressed at all.” - Primary school parent

“Move away from workbooks that are costly and bad for the environment” - Primary school parent

Almost half of secondary school parents (45%) said they had to pay for digital subscriptions for the children on top of buying physical books. On average, those who had to pay for digital subscriptions spent €106.

“At the moment we are paying for all of the books & digital books as well as a chrome book.” - Secondary school parent

“Secondary school children should not have to buy the hardcopy of books as well as the digital subscription.” - Secondary school parent

“Seems a waste to pay for physical books and ebooks and iPad. There should be a policy from Dept of Education.” - Secondary school parent

84% of primary and 67% of secondary school parents said they were asked to contribute towards classroom resources, where the average cost was €51 and €71 respectively for those who did.

Digital Tools

Overall, primary school parents spent €48 on average on digital costs while secondary school parents spent €147. One-third (32%) of secondary school parents stated they had to pay over €300 for digital costs for their child. Several parents said they had to spread the cost across multiple years just to be able to afford the item, trying their best to ensure that their children are not left out. This will often mean paying interest or a higher amount for the item.

“We have to get a tablet for our son at a cost at €700” - Secondary school parent

“iPad school, must buy iPad in first year over €900.” - Secondary school parent

“My child will start secondary school in 2024 and the school we’re applying to will not let them start unless they purchase an iPad from them which costs €1300. This is ludicrous.” - Secondary school parent

Some parents were exasperated by the high price of digital tools on top of books costs.

“Get rid of iPads in school - €800 for a device is crazy with books costing additional €300” - Secondary school parent

There are concerns about the pressure being placed on families who cannot afford new laptops and tablets for their children and certainly not one for every child they have in school. There is a risk that children who have less access to digital tools will be placed at a disadvantage compared to their peers. For example, a child who has to share a laptop with multiple siblings in comparison to classmates who have their own personal laptops.

“Primary schools now expect children to have access to a laptop or iPad when at home to do online work regarding school. I personally could not afford it in my budget during this school year and I had an issue with the school demanding the work to be completed at home. This should be taken into consideration when the cost of going to school is being added up. I now need an iPad and Wi-Fi which is a basic amount of 800 euro per year.” - Primary school parent

Voluntary contributions

“I will go without essentials to make sure my school financial contribution will be met. Some children are made to feel inferior when they are - very publicly - not given a journal or locker key.” - Secondary school parent

Each year, schools across Ireland ask parents to make a ‘voluntary’ contribution to help fund the running costs of the school for the upcoming year, due to insufficient funding from the Department of Education.

74% of primary and 78% of secondary school parents said that their schools requested a voluntary contribution. The average amount asked for by schools was €101 for primary school parents and €143 for secondary school parents. This fee can add significant pressure for parents.

Many parents stated that they feel compelled to pay it despite not having the financial means to do so and that they are chased up by schools when they do not pay the contribution. Over two-thirds of parents (67%) said that it did not feel voluntary. Four in five secondary school parents (80%) and two thirds of primary school parents (68%) said that parents should not have to pay it.

“The school are regularly sending reminders via the app about voluntary contributions which feels very pressuring” - Secondary school parent

“I think voluntary contribution should just be called a school fee. That's what it is. And it should be listed on all the schools' websites clearly as to how much it is.” - Primary school parent

“The voluntary payment does not feel voluntary. We regularly receive notifications that we owe a payment.” - Secondary school parent

“It's not voluntary, pressure is always put on to pay it.” - Primary school parent

“The government should speak more about voluntary contributions. My school told me that they weren’t really voluntary even though they were called that and that every child would have to pay” - Secondary school parent

Some parents stated that they are worried that not paying the fee could negatively affect their child. Others were concerned that it would lead to their child(ren) going without essential elements of school life, such as journals and lockers.

“Our school combines contribution with school rental scheme. It’s €250! No fee paid. No books given out! Not fair. I save during the summer to ensure I have the money as my child would be very embarrassed if I didn’t pay it.” - Primary school parent

“It’s not voluntary it’s madness. If we don’t pay they don’t get journals or lockers and they are a must.” - Secondary school parent

Parents repeatedly stated that voluntary contributions should be abolished, that the government should fully fund schools so that they don’t have to rely on these fees imposed on parents.

“Fund schools enough that voluntary contributions are not required. Government should fund schools so that they should not have to ask for voluntary contributions.” - Secondary school parent

“Increase their contribution to the school so that the Voluntary Contribution is not necessary for the school to function.” - Secondary school parent

“Fully remove voluntary contributions.” - Primary school parent

Conclusion and Recommendations

“Should abolish school uniforms that we can’t buy in normal shops. Should help with the cost of schoolbooks for those not eligible for any help. The list is actually endless what they could do. I’ve had to put 4 kids through school each year on my own cause I had a full-time job to try give my kids everything they deserve in life and get punished for it by not getting any help.” - Secondary school parent

Barnardos believes that no parent should face financial pressure in trying to meet what are essential costs for their children’s education. By investing in our education system and tackling school costs, we can ensure that all children start off with the same resources, increasing their ability to reach their full potential. We know that the impact of a child’s early experiences lasts a lifetime and school is an essential part of that experience. We offered parents an opportunity to suggest priorities for the government that would make costs more affordable for them. Our recommendations are based on what they told us.

We’re calling on the Government to:

1. Free school books

Extend the free schoolbooks scheme to all secondary schools. At a minimum, schools should not require parents to pay for both physical and online editions of books.

2. Low-cost uniforms

Parents stressed that schools should provide a low-cost uniform option. Only 28% of primary school parents and 11% of secondary school parents said that their schools offered a low-cost uniform option. Over three quarters of parents (78%) said that they thought their children’s schools could do more to lower the cost of uniforms.

The Department of Education needs to take a firmer grip on the situation. The Circular on affordable uniforms is not achieving what it was set out to do. The Department should mandate that all schools in Ireland introduce low-cost uniform options.

3. Back to School Footwear and Clothing Allowance and Child Benefit

Commit to extending the €100 increase to the Back to School Allowance on a permanent basis. Consider extending the threshold so that more families and children can benefit from the payment.

Extend Child Benefit for children over 18 who are still in secondary school. The Government could apply the same rules as they do for the BSCFA; you must be aged 18-22 and returning to full-time second-level education in a recognised school or college.

4. End voluntary contributions

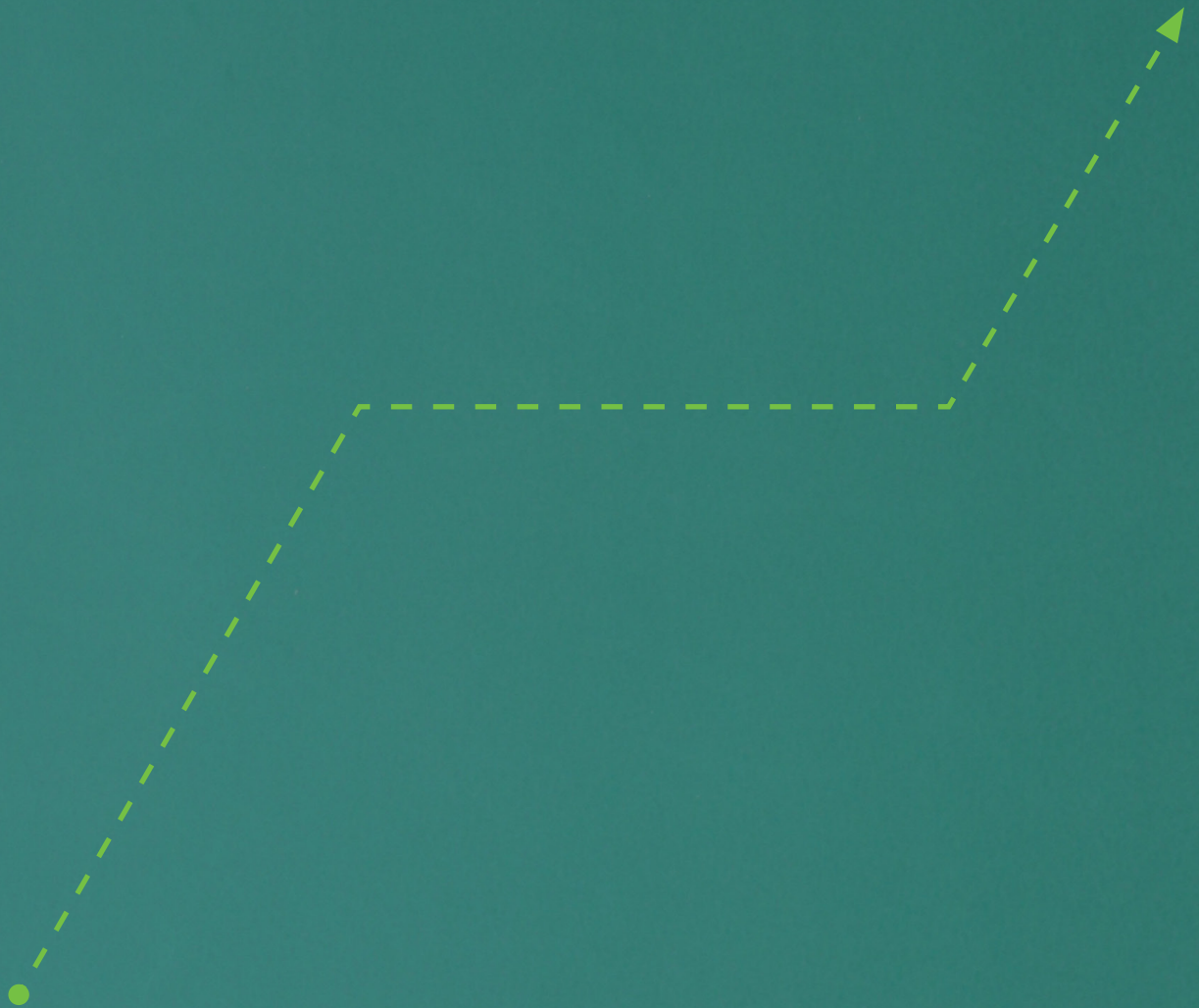
Barnardos believes that parents should not be required to cover the daily cost of running a school.

The Department of Education should appropriately fund schools, so that they do not require additional income from parents. At an absolute minimum, no school should be entitled to: combine voluntary contributions with fees for school essentials such as lockers, journals and

access to book rental scheme; follow up or send out reminders for the payment of voluntary contributions, and never through a child; and maintain lists of parents who have and have not paid voluntary contributions.

About Barnardos

As Ireland's leading children's charity, helping vulnerable children since the 1960s, Barnardos works with vulnerable children and families to provide practical, social and emotional support. Barnardos supports children and families all across Ireland who have been affected by traumatic life events such as abuse, parental mental health, neglect, separation, bereavement and addiction. Our core purpose remains the same; 'to help the most vulnerable children in society achieve their full potential – regardless of their family circumstances, their gender, race or disability' – Because Childhood Lasts a Lifetime.



Barnardos

Because childhood lasts a lifetime

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