



CHURCH OF IRELAND
BOARD OF EDUCATION

SUBMISSION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND YOUTH Regarding BUDGET 2026



Submitted: September 2025



Education Requires A Significant Increase in Funding in 2026!

What increased costs are facing schools?

The costs of running a school has increased hugely over the past 3 years:

1. **Insurance + 40%**
2. **Energy Costs (light and heat) +20-30%**
3. **Resourcing and supplies (+Vat 13.5%)**
4. **ICT Increased Costs**
5. **Professional Fees Increases**
6. **Water usage costs**

50% of primary schools surveyed
were in a deficit in 2024*



Relying on voluntary contributions from parents represents a lack of adequate investment in education by the State.

What specific financial issues face Church of Ireland Schools?

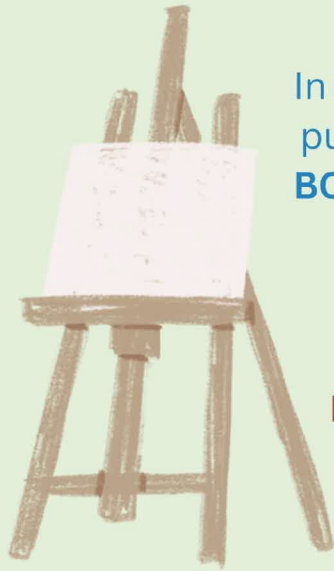
In making this submission, the Board is acutely aware of the financial situation of small primary schools in particular.

A large number of Church of Ireland primary schools are small or smaller schools (ie. 121 schools with less than four teachers).

86 Church of Ireland primary schools have enrolment above 60 pupils with four teachers.

These schools are at a material and resourcing disadvantage due to the minimum payments threshold of 60 pupils for capitation and ancillary grants.

We propose that the minimum threshold of 60 pupils for grant payments should be reviewed to seek to provide alleviation for schools with four teachers but more than 60 pupils in the school.



In 2025 the amount a school of 60 pupils could expect to receive for **BOTH** STEM and Art subjects was: €1,341.80

The basic amount is only €500

Evidently, this sum is inadequate.



ICT and Digital Learning is now essential to Teaching and Learning.

At the 2025 rate, a small primary school with less than 60 pupils

will receive only €3,159.80 for all ICT for the year.

This is wholly inadequate.

A substantial increase in ICT Grants is required and should be viewed as an essential social investment.



What are our 'Asks' for Primary Schools?

School Operational Costs

- **An increase to the Capitation Grant of at least €75** to bring the basic support grant to schools per child to €300 per annum.
- **Increase the Capitation and Ancillary grant payment threshold** for schools with four teachers and more than 60 pupils to 78 (in line with the appointments threshold for P +3 teachers).
- **Continue to provide the 'Cost of Living' grant** to schools at the 2025 rate.
- **Move all salary liabilities** (e.g. school bus escorts, cleaners and caretakers) from the school **to the Department of Education and Youth payroll.**
- **Provide an indicative schedule of grant payments to schools** by May each year for the forthcoming school year.
- **Recognise the costs of professional fees on schools** (such as accountants/audit fees, surveyor fees on buildings, legal fees, etc.) and examine ways to mitigate these costs for schools.

Teaching and Learning

- In common with the other school management bodies and the primary teacher union, we seek **a further reduction in the ptr to 19:1**

School Management Supports

- **Recognise the importance of timely and professional advices** as an essential support to school boards of management through restoring and increasing funding for the primary management 'core' grant to realistic levels.

Pupil Wellbeing

- **Increased Resourcing to the NEPS and the NCSE** to include increased access to psychological assessments for pupils.
- **Provide funding for wellbeing and psychological support spaces** for pupils such as sensory gardens and nurture rooms.

Buildings and Capital Expenditure

- **Recognise the impact of MICA on school buildings** (in the North West region) by providing a specific redress scheme for schools affected.
- **Increase the funding available for the fitting out of Special Classes to €100,000.**
- **Recognise and adequately fund the increased costs of the purchase of ICT equipment**, the upgrading of ICT equipment and devices and the costs involved in cyber security and IT licensing for schools.



What are our key 'Asks' for Post-Primary Level?



The Board joins in general submissions already made to the DEY by the Joint Managerial Body for Secondary Schools (JMB) and the Association for Community and Comprehensive Schools (ACCS)

Post primary schools which are under Church of Ireland Patronage and which charge fees received all other funding and equal resourcing to non-fee charging schools under an agreement entered into by the Protestant sector and the State – **at the invitation of the State** – on the introduction of the free education scheme in 1968.

This agreement was mostly set aside in 2008/09 under the auspices of the 'austerity cuts' and has not been reviewed by Government since, despite consistent calls for the situation to be reviewed.

The Board reiterates its long held position that these reductions in the pupil teacher ratio's, the withdrawal of ancillary grants and removal of Guidance Counsellors, made in 2009, were unjust, ill-conceived and should be reconsidered.

As an immediate measure, the Board seeks Church of Ireland/Protestant SEC scheme recognised post-primary schools be deemed eligible for the free book grant scheme.



A Few Key Statistics

174 Primary Schools under Church of Ireland Patronage

5% of All Primary Schools in Ireland

8,180 Boys

7,786 Girls



15,966 Primary Pupils (Sept 2024)

550+ Teachers at Primary Level



**1,500 Board of
Management Members
Representing: Parents,
Patrons, Teachers, School
Community.**

Post-Primary Level

Total of 28

Post-Primary Schools under Protestant/Church of Ireland Patronage

19

Schools with Boarding Facilities

Female Students = 7879

Male Students = 7442

**Total number of Students
at PP Level = 15,321
(3% of All PP Students)**

**Student Number Total for
Primary and Post-Primary = 31,287**
(3% of All under 18 in school nationally)





In making this submission, we join with the submission made by our colleague organisation, the CPSMA and support submissions made by the other school management bodies and the teacher unions.

*Survey on school finances conducted by the CPSMA in 2025 and available on www.cpsma.ie

**Submitted to the Department of Education and Youth
on behalf of The General Synod Board of Education (RI)
of the Church of Ireland**

September 2025

Contact:

Dr Ken Fennelly
Secretary and Education Officer
ken.fennelly@rcbcoi.org
01 4125609