



Circular Number **61/2024**

To: Boards of Management and Principals of Post Primary Schools

Grant Scheme in respect of Maternity Related Absences

Introduction

This circular provides information in relation to the Maternity Related Absences Home Tuition Grant Scheme, operated by the Department's Parents and Learners Unit. It should be read carefully by applicants before completing the Application Form HT MRA 24.

- **Maternity Related Absences**

The Circular contains information on:

1. Criteria for eligibility under the terms of the scheme
2. Application Procedure
3. Criteria for the Provision of Grant Aid
4. Child protection and safeguarding considerations for parents/legal guardians
5. Vetting Requirements for Tutors
6. General Information
7. Payment Procedures
8. Data Protection Privacy Statement
9. Queries and Appeals

Applications can be submitted from the date this circular is issued.

1. Criteria for eligibility under the terms of the scheme

The purpose of the Maternity Related Home Tuition Grant Scheme is to provide funding towards the provision of a compensatory educational service for girls at post-primary level who, due to their pregnancy, are unable to attend school. All applicants must have a current school place at post-primary level.

Maternity Related Home Tuition is intended as an interim provision to assist girls to complete their post-primary education.

As the senior cycle is a two-year educational programme, pupils participating in transition year programmes are not eligible under this scheme.

Provision of tuition under this scheme is for a **maximum of 90 hours** over a 6-month period from the date of sanction. The upper limit of hours may be subject to review by the Department of Education from time to time.

The Home Tuition grant is for educational teaching intervention only.



2. Application Procedure

Where a female student is unable to attend school for a period before or after the birth of her child, the Department of Education may sanction a grant to the parent/legal guardian or the student herself where she is over 18 years old, to engage a suitably qualified tutor to provide home tuition.

Applicants will be required to complete an Application Form - Form HT MRA24 and are requested to pay particular attention to the supporting documentation/ information that is required.

- Section 1 of the form is completed by the parent or student if she is 18 years or over.
- Section 2 of the form is completed by the School Principal.
- Section 3 of the form is completed by the proposed tutor(s).
- A medical certificate confirming pregnancy should be sent in with the completed application form.

HT MRA 24 is available on the Departments website at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/d15f58-home-tuition/>. It should be noted that sanction is only available on completion of the full application process which culminates in the issue of an approval letter confirming the date from which tuition may commence.

3. Criteria for the Provision of Grant Aid

The Department of Education provides a grant towards the provision of Home Tuition. Parents/legal guardians engage tutors in a private arrangement; however, the awarding of the grant is subject to the following criteria:

Qualified Tutors

As tuition takes place outside the usual school structure it is important that home tutors are qualified to provide an appropriate educational program. Accordingly, it is preferable that parents/legal guardians recruit a tutor who is qualified for the relevant sector in which tuition is being provided e.g. primary teaching qualification for children of primary school age. It is a condition of the scheme that the proposed tutor is registered with and recognised by the Teaching Council for the duration of the approved tuition up to and including issue of final payment.

Where all efforts have failed to secure the services of a teacher qualified to teach in the sector concerned, the Department may consider the engagement of a person who is registered with the Teaching Council and has a primary degree (minimum Level 7 on the National Framework of Qualifications) in a relevant area. It is a requirement of the scheme that tutors have to notify the Teaching Council of Ireland to make their details available on the Paymaster Interface through the Teaching Council website, in order for this Department to verify that teachers have current registration. This facility can be enabled on the 'My Registration' section of the Teaching Council's website www.teachingcouncil.ie.

To be eligible for the qualified rate of payment, a tutor must be registered and recognised by the Teaching Council in the sector for which the tuition is being provided ie Qualified primary teacher and who is tutoring a primary student or a qualified post primary teacher and who is tutoring a post-primary student.



Route 5 Student Teachers are not eligible to provide tuition under the Home Tuition Grant Scheme.

Teachers registered with the Teaching Council in a different educational sector from that in which they are providing tuition and Teachers who are registered and qualified and who are in receipt of payment of a public service pension will be paid at the modified rate. For further details on payments to tutors see link:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/service/d15f58-home-tuition/#home-tuition-payments>

Home Tutors are engaged by the Parent/ legal guardian and are self- employed tutors who are subject to statutory deductions at source. The Department acts only as a payroll agent on behalf of the parents/legal guardians. This is to facilitate compliance with statutory deduction provisions including taxation and associated provisions.

Where a tutor intends to provide Home Tuition more than 27 hours, in any week, a timetable detailing the provision of hours will be required before approval is granted for the tuition to commence.

Home Tuition must not commence until the approval letter is received by the applicant confirming the date from which tuition may commence and that the qualifications and identification of the nominated tutor/s have been formally approved in writing by the Department.

Teachers who are availing of approved paid or unpaid leave from their employment are not eligible to deliver tuition. However, a teacher who is on a Career Break or who is Job Sharing may be engaged as a tutor for the Home Tuition Grant Schemes.

It is the responsibility of the parent/legal guardian to source a tutor at the earliest possible opportunity to allow for applications for registration/vetting to be made by the tutor to the Teaching Council, if necessary. This Department does not keep lists of tutors available to carry out home tuition. It may be helpful to contact local schools in the first instance. Alternatively, the Department is aware that many parents use education provider websites to advertise for tutors or place advertisements in local newspapers or on shop/community notice boards. Additionally, to help parents source a home tutor for this scheme in their local area, the Irish Primary Principals' Network (IPPN) has created a Home Tuition Noticeboard for Parents to help them source suitable candidates. This noticeboard is available on www.educationposts.ie

Parents/legal guardians are not permitted to act as tutors for their children under these schemes.

4. Child Protection & Safeguarding considerations for parent/legal guardians

It is the responsibility of parents/legal guardians to be mindful of any risks or potential dangers involved in engaging tutors in a private arrangement. It is the responsibility of the parent/legal guardian to ensure that all appropriate and necessary child protection and welfare safeguards are in place in respect of the tutoring arrangement.



(See also section 5 regarding vetting requirements).

It is the responsibility of the parent/legal guardian to undertake all relevant checks regarding a prospective tutor's suitability to work with their child and to satisfy themselves regarding the suitability of the person to carry out tuition with their child. Parents/legal guardians should also satisfy themselves that tutors are aware of any relevant medical and behavioral needs of the child.

The Children First Act 2015 has put elements of the Children First-National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children on a statutory footing.

The Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children outlines the statutory obligations that apply to mandated persons such as registered teachers and the statutory obligations that apply to organisations (such as schools) under the Act. It also sets out the best practice (non-statutory) obligations which are in place for all individuals (including teachers) and for all sectors of society. The Children First Act, 2015 operates side-by-side with the Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017.

Information on Child Protection can be obtained on the Department's Website:
<https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/9e0b6-child-protection-in-schools/>

5. Vetting Requirements for Tutors

It is a requirement under the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016 (NVB Act) that individuals who work with children and vulnerable persons be vetted by the National Vetting Bureau (the Bureau).

All tutors must be Garda vetted by the National Vetting Bureau prior to commencing the delivery of tuition.

Parents/legal guardians must request a newly issued Garda Vetting disclosure in circumstances where they are engaging the tutor for the first time.

Parents/legal guardians should note that all registered teachers can apply to be Garda vetted through the Teaching Council of Ireland's website. The process is free of charge and normally takes between 2-4 weeks.

Parents/legal guardians must satisfy themselves that their selected tutor/s have completed the Garda Vetting process via the Teaching Council's online Garda Vetting process and hold a current Garda Vetting disclosure statement. They can view the outcome and date of the vetting by viewing the result of the tutor's vetting search. This is known as a Vetting Disclosure, which the tutor can share through the Teaching Council's secure online IT solution, Digitary.



Parents/legal guardians should be aware that vetting does not provide clearance for tutors to work with children, but simply provides particulars of any criminal record and/or specified information in respect of the tutor concerned or, where there is no criminal record or specified information, states this fact.

The final decision in relation to the person's suitability, from a child protection perspective, to work with a student is a matter for the parent/legal guardian concerned. In that regard, parents/ legal guardians should note that the outcome of garda vetting is just one factor to consider in making that decision. Thorough checks of the person's suitability are an essential element of good child protection practice and are the responsibility of the parent/legal guardian. These should include, but are not limited to, seeking and following up of references and ensuring that any unexplained gaps in employment records/curriculum vitae are satisfactorily accounted for. Vetting should not take the place of those checks but must be used as part of same.

Please note that each application for Home Tuition must be accompanied by a Statutory Declaration Form (Appendix 1 of the relevant Application Form).

Full information for tutors in relation to the process of applying for Garda Vetting is available at: <https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/Vetting-Re-vetting>.

6. General Information

Applicants will be required to complete an Application Form and are requested to pay particular attention to the documentation/information that is required. It should be noted that sanction is only available on completion of the full application process which culminates in the issue of an approval letter confirming date from which tuition may commence.

The Home Tuition Grant is for educational teaching interventions only.

The Department reserves the right to evaluate the education provision being delivered and all hours are approved subject to this condition.

Home Tuition grants are sanctioned to provide an individualised educational program. Tutors must therefore provide tuition on a 1:1 basis between the hours of 9.00am and 6.00pm (excluding school and bank holidays and weekends) unless otherwise sanctioned by the Department.

The standard breaks at Christmas, Easter and Mid-term in the first and second terms for the school year are available at the link below: <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/388196-school-holiday-dates/>.

Unused hours from any given week cannot transfer to a subsequent week.

If more than one tutor is being applied for, section 3 of the application form must be completed by each tutor being proposed. The applicant must clearly state the total number of hours of tuition each tutor will provide. The sanction letter will confirm the total number of hours for each tutor.



Students who are undertaking study of subjects for Junior and Leaving Certificate Examinations need to read carefully the requirements of the State Examinations Commission for practical coursework. The subjects with practical coursework can be found at www.examinations.ie. If the State Examinations Commission requirements are not met, this may result in a student not being able to achieve all the marks available for the subject.

7. Payment Procedures

Parents/legal guardians and tutors should ensure that they are fully aware of and compliant with the conditions of this scheme and how the grant payment will issue under this Scheme before any tuition is provided.

Parents/legal guardians engage tutors for the provision of Home Tuition in a private arrangement.

Payments made to tutors on behalf of the applicant are subject to statutory deductions at source. The Department acts as a payroll agent only on behalf of the parent/legal guardian. This is to facilitate compliance with statutory deduction provisions including taxation and associated provisions.

In cases where a child is in the care of TUSLA, payments in respect of home tuition provided are made directly to Tusla and not to the Tutor.

Parents/legal guardians are advised that under no circumstances should they make payments to tutors for tuition provided by them under this scheme.

The Home Tuition Grant Rates are available at <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/d15f58-home-tuition/#home-tuition-payments> and are subject to change.

A false declaration for the purposes of claiming resources from the Department may result in the matter being referred by the Department to An Garda Síochána and, if appropriate, to the Teaching Council.

Parents/legal guardians and tutors should note that, under existing legislation, financial details in respect of this scheme are forwarded annually to the Revenue Commissioners, as home tuition payments are reckonable for taxation purposes.

How the grant is paid: A separate more detailed payment information note is available to parents/legal guardians and tutors on the website of the Department at <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/d15f58-home-tuition/#home-tuition-payments>.

8. Data Protection Privacy Statement

The Department of Education, as far as is practicable and having regard to the resources available, provides for education and training for people resident in the State at a level appropriate to meet the needs and abilities of those people. The main purpose for which the Department requires the personal data provided by you is to determine eligibility for the Home Tuition Grant Scheme.



The personal data provided will be shared with TUSLA (Child and Family Agency), National Council for Special Education (NCSE), the Department of Education and the Revenue Commissioners for the purposes of; determining eligibility for the Home Tuition Grant Scheme, processing payments, ensuring there is no duplication of funding and for statistical purposes.

The Privacy Notice outlining further information in relation to this Scheme can be found at: [gov.ie - General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\) Privacy Notices \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie)

Full details of the Department's Data Protection policy setting out how we will use your personal data or that of your child, as well as information regarding your rights as a data subject, are available at <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr-privacy-notice/> Details of this policy are also available in hard copy upon request.

9. Queries and Appeals

Queries in relation to the **award** of the Home Tuition Grant Scheme can be addressed to:
Parents and Learners Unit - Home Tuition Section Department of Education
Cornamaddy Athlone, Co. Westmeath N37 X659
Contact No: 090 648 4108
Email Address: hometuitionapprovals@education.gov.ie

Appeals in relation to decisions under the Home Tuition Grant Scheme may be submitted in writing to the above address, quoting the Home Tuition Reference No., and outlining the reasons for the appeal along with additional documents or reports, as appropriate.

Payment queries in respect of Home Tuition scheme can be addressed to:
Special Needs and Tuition Grants
Department of Education Cornamaddy, Athlone, Co. Westmeath N37 X659
Contact No: 090 648 3996
Email Address: htpayments@education.gov.ie

This Circular, together with all relevant information, is available to download from the Department's website – [gov.ie - Home Tuition Grant Scheme for children without a school place \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie)

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