

Guidelines on the appropriate use of the DEIS Grant in DEIS Primary and Post-Primary Schools

“Schools that receive additional support and resources through participation in DEIS are expected to support the DEIS Action Plan through a systematic planning and monitoring process at individual school level and at school cluster/community level. The involvement of students, parents, local communities and agencies operating at local level is considered an important dimension of the planning process. Schools are expected to develop Action Plans focusing on the following areas: attendance, retention, educational progression, literacy and numeracy, examination attainment (at second level), parent and community partnership, partnership between schools and links with external agencies. Progress in the implementation of these Action Plans should be kept under review and adjusted in light of experience”.

(Looking at Action Planning for Improvement in DEIS Primary Schools, DES, 2015, Looking at Action Planning for Improvement in DEIS Post Primary Schools, DES, 2015)

A key focus is to continue to ensure that DEIS supports, including the DEIS Grant, are targeted at those pupils most at risk of educational disadvantage. All schools are again reminded of the importance of the planning process under the key themes listed below, as required under DEIS. As stated in Department Circular 0039/2016: *Continuing Implementation of School Self-Evaluation 2016-2020*, “Schools in the DEIS Programme are required to develop and implement three year improvement plans as a condition of their participation in DEIS. **These plans are the school’s improvement plan for the purposes of school self-evaluation and no additional or separate improvement plan is required.**”

Themes to be addressed are:

- Attendance
- Retention
- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Supporting Educational Transitions
- Partnership with parents and others
- Academic outcomes (post-primary only)

Schools in the DEIS programme are required to set out a three-year DEIS Action Plan for Improvement. As part of this process, schools are asked to set specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time specific targets and to evaluate these annually by monitoring the impact of actions undertaken in the key DEIS themes which are set out below.

The DEIS Grant should be utilised to attain the targets set in the school’s DEIS Action Plan across the DEIS themes. In this regard, financial resources should be targeted at the individual pupils who are considered **most at risk** and at addressing educational disadvantage through a focused response.

1. Literacy and Numeracy – Identifying the needs of the most at risk pupils and developing of strategies and targeted measures to improve literacy and numeracy levels.

2. Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) and Partnership with parents and others – For DEIS schools included in the HSCL Scheme, the HSCL Coordinator plays a critical role in supporting the development, implementation, evaluation, and review of the school’s DEIS Action Plan, particularly in the promotion of parental involvement by involving parents in their children’s learning and developing their confidence and capabilities in their role as primary educators.

3. School Attendance – Identifying the needs of the most at risk pupils and developing strategies and targeted measures to improve levels of school attendance

4. Educational Progression, Examination Attainment (for second level students), and School Retention – Identifying the needs of the most at risk pupils and developing strategies and targeted measures to tackle problems of early school leaving; improving levels of educational progression, examination attainment (for second level students) and retention. Includes programmes such as transfer and mentoring programmes.

“As outlined in the DEIS Action Plan, retention relates to ensuring that pupils remain in the school system until the completion of the Leaving Certificate examination. Progression relates to ensuring pupils make successful transitions from one school level to the next; either from junior primary to senior primary schools or from primary to post-primary schools. For most primary schools, retaining pupils in school from junior infants to sixth class and progression to second level are not problematic and therefore action planning for improvement in these areas may not be a central part of the school’s DEIS planning process”.

(Looking at Action Planning for Improvement in Primary Schools, DES 2015)

5. Partnership – Develop strategies to increase the level of participation and partnership between schools, parents and community, and links with external agencies.

In each of these themes the following must be undertaken:

- identify the most at risk pupils for the targeting of additional resources
- identify the needs of the targeted pupils
- identify the priority areas of activity to meet the needs of the targeted pupils
- identify the desired outcomes to meet the needs of the targeted pupils
- identify on-going requirement for Professional Development (CPD)
- identify and put in place the interventions which will achieve the desired outcomes

Home School Community Liaison Expenditure

For DEIS schools included in the HSCL Scheme, it is a requirement that at least 10% of the annual DEIS Grant to each school should be allocated for use on HSCL activities and made available to the HSCL Coordinator. If 10% is not sufficient, the school should use its discretion as to the appropriate amount of funding from the DEIS Grant that should be provided to operate the HSCL service. In addition to travel expenses currently being paid to HSCL Coordinators, travel expenses for HSCL Coordinators who attend Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Programmes organised by the Educational

Welfare Service of TESS should be claimed from within the DEIS Grant. The reduced motor mileage rates apply for attending such CPD courses. The applicable mileage rate of travel can be downloaded from www.circulars.gov.ie.

DEIS schools participating in the HSCL Scheme are requested by the Department, on an annual basis, to provide information on HSCL expenditure including Objectives, Targets, Activities and Outcomes under HSCL.

DEIS Related School Facilities Expenditure

Arising from DEIS related activities, individual school buildings may open earlier or may remain open later in the evenings, e.g. to cater for clubs. Some of the additional DEIS Grant may be used to meet ancillary costs such as heating, lighting and other miscellaneous charges arising from this type of activity. These costs should be linked to the key actions listed at 1-5 above, e.g., the cost of heating and lighting for breakfast clubs operated in order to promote school attendance. (For further information on The Sharing of School Facilities with the Community refer to Circular Letter Post Primary M18/05 & Prim 16/05 at

www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/m18_05_prim16_05.doc

Management and oversight of Funds

Primary and Post-Primary schools

In accordance with Section 18 of the Education Act 1998, schools are required to keep records of all activities undertaken and materials and resources purchased with grants. Income and expenditure accounts should be retained in the school and be made available if, and when, required by officers of the Department of Education and Skills and/or the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

Schools must ensure compliance with Circular: 13/2014, Management of and Accountability for Grants from Exchequer Funds. Please refer to

<https://govacc.per.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/DPER-Circular-13-14-Guidance-Note-and-Reporting-Requirements-1.pdf>

Schools should be aware that accounts are subject to audit. With this in mind, schools should make every effort to ensure best value for money and adopt best financial practices in order to be compliant with the Act and relevant circulars. The services of the Financial Shared Services Unit (www.fssu.ie) are available in this regard should you need their advice on such matters.

ETB Schools

In accordance with Section 51 of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013 the Department requests that ETBs' accounts of income and expenditure should be retained and made available from time to time to officers of the Department of Education and Skills.

Schools should consider the following when expending DEIS funds:

Is the item/service relevant to the actions listed on the School Plan?

Will the purchase or use of the item/service assist in achieving the targets set by the School Plan?
How will it assist in achieving the outcomes and can such outcomes be measured?

Is the item/service available under an existing scheme?

When considering expenditure of funds from the DEIS grant, schools should look to other agencies and supports to identify if there are any existing schemes or support programmes available. Schemes/support programmes to consider are those available for:

School Uniforms – Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection grant

Utility Bills – This should be met by capitation grant funding (except for out of hours DEIS related running costs)

School Meals – Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection school meals scheme

CPD for Staff – Professional Development Service for Teachers

School Books – Enhanced school book grant for DEIS Schools from Department of Education and Skills
Building/ICT – Minor Works Grant and ICT Infrastructure Grant available from Department of Education and Skills

Assistive Technology - Assistive Technology Scheme available from Department of Education and Skills.

Schools should also seek to cooperate with local agencies to improve service delivery and avoid duplication of resources.