



Department of Social and Family Affairs

Hanafin urges parents to apply now for help with Back to School costs

New TEXT service makes it easier to get forms

With the new school year just days away the Minister for Social and Family Affairs Mary Hanafin T.D., is urging parents who may be entitled to the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance to apply now for financial support that is available. This year some €46million is earmarked to support parents with the costs of clothing and footwear for pupils.

Parents or guardians can qualify if they have a dependent child and are receiving a Social Welfare payment or a Health Service Executive payment or participate on certain approved employment or training schemes. The payments for back to school costs are funded by the Department of Social and Family Affairs.

Speaking today Minister Hanafin said back to school time is always a busy time for families, but **“don’t overlook the chance to get some financial support to ease the pressure at this time of year. It is now easier than ever to receive an application form for the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance.**”

The new text service now makes it even quicker for parents to apply for the relevant forms. For those who are eligible, they can now apply by text message to request an application form. Text - FORM BTSCFA - to 51909 followed by their name and address. They can also log onto the Departments website at www.welfare.ie to request a form and there is also a 24 hour LoCall leaflet line number to order forms – 1890 20 23 25. Completed applications should then be sent to their Community Welfare Officer at their local office of the Health Service Executive”

The funding that is available this year is expected to benefit some 190,000 primary and post primary pupils. Minister Hanafin said **“the Department is currently running a major nationwide awareness campaign with advertisements running on radio and in the national press to remind people who may qualify for the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance to apply by 30th September. I urge all those who think they are eligible, to apply now.”**

Parents receive **€200 for each eligible child aged between 2 and 11 years and €305 for each child aged between 12 and 22 years.** Parents can apply to their local HSE office for funding under the Scheme from right up until the end of September.

Minister Hanafin said the funding for the **Back to School Clothing and Footwear scheme has been increased by over €6 million or 15% since last year and is expected to benefit over 88,000 families this year.”**

The Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance helps people who are in receipt of certain social welfare and Health Service Executive (HSE) payments with the cost of children's school clothing and footwear. It is also available to people on low incomes who



Department of Social and Family Affairs

are getting Family Income Supplement or who are taking part in approved employment schemes or training courses.

Minister Hanafin went on to say “**people on welfare payments, low-income employment or in a training programme should examine the conditions of this scheme to see if they are eligible. This scheme is there to help those who genuinely need support in getting their children kitted out for the new school year that is just upon us.**”

ENDS
24th August 2008

Note for Editors:

A person may qualify for the Back to School Clothing and Footwear scheme if they are:

- getting a Social Welfare payment (including Family Income Supplement) or a Health Service Executive (HSE) payment

or

- taking part in one of the following approved employment schemes or training courses:
 - Back to Work Allowance (Employees) (BTWA),
 - Back to Work Enterprise Allowance (BTWEA),
 - Community Employment,
 - Revenue Job Assist,
 - Community Services Programme (formerly Social Economy Programme (Grant Aided Employees),
 - Job Initiative,
 - Workplace,
 - Youthreach,
 - Back to Education Allowance,
 - Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS),
 - Area Partnership Scheme,
 - FÁS, Fáilte Ireland or LES training scheme or Rural Social Scheme.

and

- getting a Qualified Child Increase with their social welfare payment

and

- their household income is within the limits in either of the tables below.

Household income includes:

- the person’s main social welfare or Health Service Executive payment and



Department of Social and Family Affairs

- other income including earnings before tax, but excluding PRSI.

Couple with:	Income limit
1 child	€496.10
2 children	€520.10
3 children	€544.10
4 children	€568.10 *
* limit is increased by €24 for each additional child	

Lone parent with:	Income limit
1 child	€347.30
2 children	€371.30
3 children	€395.30
4 children	€419.30 *
* limit is increased by €24 for each additional child	

Further information on social welfare services is available:

- at www.welfare.ie,
- from all Social Welfare Offices,
- at LoCall **1890 66 22 44** (from the Republic of Ireland only) 9.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. Monday To Friday.