



An Roinn Gnóthaí Fostaíochta
agus Coimirce Sóisialaí
Department of Employment Affairs
and Social Protection

Minister Doherty announces details of the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance scheme for 2018

#backtoschool

Monday, 25th June, 2018: The Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Regina Doherty, T.D., has announced details of the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance scheme for 2018.

The Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance is a means-tested once-off payment aimed at helping families with the costs associated with children returning to school in the autumn. To qualify for the Allowance, the applicant must be in receipt of certain social welfare payments or taking part in training, employment or adult education schemes, with total household income below a certain threshold.

The Allowance will be paid automatically in the week ending Friday, 13th July 2018, to approximately 100,000 customers in respect of 170,000 school children. The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection is currently writing to these customers.

The Minister, along with the Minister for Education, Richard Bruton, T.D. encouraged parents who have not previously received the payment but who think they may qualify to check their eligibility.

Speaking from St Declan's National School in Ashbourne County Meath (*photograph attached), Minister Doherty said:

“The costs associated with children both starting and returning to school can put a lot of financial pressure on families throughout the country. The Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance can make a real difference in helping families and is available for schoolchildren from the age of four in primary school up to the age of 22 for students who are in second level education. It is paid at a rate of €125 for children aged 4-11 and €250 for children aged 12 years and over. I strongly encourage families to find out more about their eligibility at www.welfare.ie/backtoschool.

The Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance is a nationwide scheme that provides a once-off payment for eligible families to assist with the costs of school clothing and footwear when children start school each autumn. This year the Government is providing €49.5 million for the Back to School Clothing and Footwear scheme, an increase of €2.1 million on the allocation for 2017.”

Minister Bruton said:

“I recognise the pressure that families are under in relation to back to school costs and I would urge all families to check their eligibility for this scheme which provides a once-off payment to assist with the costs of school clothing and footwear.

As Minister for Education and Skills, I believe that we have to continue to put a greater emphasis on reducing the cost of school uniforms and other school costs. Last year, I issued a circular to all schools requiring them to do everything possible to keep costs down for parents, including the use of generic items, sew on or iron on crests, and making sure that various elements of the uniform can be purchased in multiple stores.”

Customers who do not receive notification of an automated payment by early July, or those who want to make a first time application, will need to apply.

Customers can get an application form at their local Intreo Centre, by texting FORM BSCFA followed by their name and address to 51909, by emailing bscfa@welfare.ie with their name and address, or by downloading a form at www.welfare.ie/backtoschool. The closing date for receipt of applications is 30th September 2018.

Any person who received the payment last year, whose circumstances have not changed and do not receive a communication in relation to the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance by early July, should contact the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection at 1890 66 22 44 or 071 919 3318 or email bscfa@welfare.ie.

The Allowance is paid in respect of eligible school children between the ages of 4 and 17 on or before 30th September 2018 and eligible students between the ages of 18 and 22 on or before 30th September 2018 who are in full-time second level education.

ENDS

Note for Editors

* **Caption:** “Minister Doherty and Minister Bruton with children from St. Declan’s National School, Ashbourne, County Meath.” More photographs are available from Shane O’Neill photography.

To qualify for the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance, the applicant must be in receipt of certain social welfare payments or taking part in training, employment or adult education schemes and the total household income must be less than the amounts set out in the table below. All dependent children are taken into account for the income limits (including children who do not qualify for the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance, because they are under the age of 4).

The total household income includes a person’s main social welfare or Health Service Executive payment and any other income they may have including wages (before tax, but excluding employee PRSI and a standard travel allowance of up to €20 per week), maintenance, savings and investments.

Savings and investments (including property, but not the claimant's home) are assessed as follows:

| Capital | Weekly means assessed |
|----------------|------------------------------|
| First €5,000 | not taken into account |
| Next €10,000 | €1 per €1,000 |
| Next €25,000 | €2 per €1,000 |
| Balance | €4 per €1,000 |

Any income from Child Benefit, [Rent Supplement](#), [Family Income Supplement](#) or any other income supplement, guardian's payments, [Blind Welfare Allowance](#), [Rehabilitation Training Allowance](#), rehabilitative employment (up to €120 per week), [Domiciliary Care Allowance](#) and [Mobility Allowance](#) is not counted.

Income Limits for 2018 are:

| Couple with: | Income Limit | Lone Parent with: | Income Limit |
|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 child | €587.20 | 1 child | €425.10 |
| 2 children | €619.00 | 2 children | €456.90 |
| 3 children | €650.80 | 3 children | €488.70 |
| 4 children | €682.60* | 4 children | €520.50* |

*Limit is increased by €31.80 for each additional child

Rates of Payment

The rates of payment are:

- €125 for children aged 4 to 11 on the 30th September 2018;
- €250 for children aged 12 to 22 on the 30th September 2018. (Children between the ages of 18 and 22 must be in full-time second level education.

Full information on the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance is available on the Department's website at this link: www.welfare.ie/backtoschool .

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