



Circular 03/00

Primary Branch

To Boards of Management and Principal Teachers of National Schools

Scheme of Additional Per Capita Grants to National Schools in respect of Secretarial and Caretaking Services

1. Introduction

The purpose of this circular is to outline the provisions that apply in relation to the scheme of additional capitation grants for secretarial and caretaking services which was introduced under the Programme for Economic and Social Progress (PESP) in 1992.

2. Background to the 1992 PESP Scheme

A scheme for the provision of grants to assist schools towards the cost of secretarial and caretaking services was introduced under PESP in September 1992. This scheme is intended to assist those schools that are not in receipt of secretarial or caretaking assistance under the 1978/1979 schemes, under which certain schools receive the benefit of a full or shared secretary or caretaker.

The 1992 scheme was instituted as a grant towards the cost of secretarial and caretaking services and does not provide for the linking of these additional grants to any particular pay-scale. Grants are based on school enrolments. Since 1992 grants have been paid at the rate of £15 per pupil in respect of each service subject to a maximum of £7,500 for one service or £15,000 for both secretarial and caretaking services.

The Department does not stipulate any rules concerning how the secretarial or caretaking services are to be obtained by the school. It is a matter for the individual school, to decide how best to apply the funding to suit the school's particular needs. In this regard it should be noted that the grant aid may be used by a school to provide both secretarial and caretaking services, or, if a school so wishes, it may decide to use the grant aid in its entirety in respect of one service only.

3. Extension of the PESP scheme in 2000

Since its introduction in 1992, the scheme of additional capitation grants to schools in respect of such services has been extended to include more schools by reducing the qualifying enrolment threshold. With effect from January 2000 the qualifying threshold has been reduced to include schools with an enrolment of 100 pupils or more on 30 September 1999. In addition the rate of grant has been increased from £30 per pupil (i.e. £15 per pupil per service) to £40 per pupil (i.e. £20 per pupil per service, subject to a maximum of £20,000 overall or £10,000 per service), subject to the following condition:

- (a) Where schools are already benefiting from the services of a fulltime or shared secretary or caretaker under the 1978/1979 schemes, they will not be entitled to receive additional grant assistance under PESP.

For example, if a school with an enrolment of 100 pupils or more has a full time or shared secretary under the 1978/1979 schemes, but has no caretaker under those schemes, the school will be entitled to receive additional grant assistance in respect of caretaking services only i.e. £20 per pupil multiplied by the school enrolment as at 30 September 1999. The school will not be entitled to receive additional grant assistance in respect of secretarial services as it already has the benefit of secretarial assistance under the 1978/1979 scheme.

4. Payment of the PESP grants

The Department is currently finalising arrangements for the payment of the PESP grants to all eligible schools. It is expected that the grant payment will be made to schools prior to the end of March 2000. The grants issuing to schools at that time are in respect of the calendar year 2000.

Payment of the grants in future years will be made on the same basis i.e. the enrolments for the preceding September will be taken into account. It is expected, however, that payment of the grant will be made in January of each year.

5. Further extension of PESP scheme to all schools in 2001

While it is not possible to extend the PESP scheme to all schools in the calendar year 2000, the Department can confirm that, with effect from the beginning of the calendar year 2001, all schools will be included in the scheme. In effect this will mean that, in 2001, all schools will receive a grant in respect of secretarial and caretaking assistance. It should be noted that a minimum grant will apply to all schools with 60 pupils or less. On the basis that the grant rate of £40 per pupil continues to apply next year, the minimum grant applicable to schools with 60 pupils or less, and who do not have the benefit of a secretary or caretaker under the 1978/1979 schemes, will be £2,400.

In the event of a school with less than 60 pupils already having the benefit of either a secretary or caretaker under the 1978/1979 schemes, the minimum grant applicable will be £1,200.

6. Queries

Any queries in connection with this circular should be directed to Primary Administration Section 2, Department of Education and Science, Athlone, Co. Westmeath (Phone 0902 – 74621 extns. 3726/7/8/9).

Peter Baldwin,
Assistant Secretary.

April 2000