

Rannán na Scoileanna – Airgeadas
An Roinn Oideachais agus
Scileanna
Cor na Madadh
Baile Átha Luain
Co. na hIarmhí



Schools Division - Financial
Department of Education and
Skills
Cornamaddy
Athlone
Co. Westmeath

Circular 0053/2010

**To Chairpersons of Boards of Management and Principals
of all Primary, Post-Primary, Community and Comprehensive schools and the Chief
Executive Officers of VECs**

Payment of Full Metered Water Charges

Full metered water charges have been charged to schools and VECs since 1 January 2010. Prior to this, transitional rates were charged.

As advised in Circular 64/2009, issued in November 2009, schools have a legal obligation to pay water charges to local authorities. Schools and VECs are reminded that failure to discharge their liabilities may lead to legal action by the local authority to recover arrears.

Schools and VECs experiencing increased water charges are advised to review their water consumption and to implement a water conservation programme.

In cases where charges have increased excessively, it may be necessary for schools and VECs to consult with their local authority to review their level of usage and establish if there are leaks on their supplies or unauthorised use.

Water Conservation and Usage Norms

The Department is advised that a per capita usage of 3.5 cubic metres is considered a reasonable level of usage, while 2.1 cubic metres is best practice. Returns indicate that, while some schools show this level of usage or below, many schools – in some local authority areas over 50% - are showing rates considerably in excess of this level, and in extreme cases above 20 cubic metres per pupil.

Each local authority sets its own rates. However, the example below is an illustration of the increase in water charges a school can experience if it does not undertake water efficiency measures.

Typical water saving in an 8-classroom Primary School, with 250 students and staff

Charges are based on one local authority's 2009 rates:

- If only connected to water supply: **97 cent** per cubic metre (i.e. school has own septic tank)
- If connected to waste and water supply: **€2.16** per cubic metre
- Fixed cost for meter: **€5** per year

Transitional rate of €4 per capita in 2009

250 x €4: **Total cost: €1,000**

2010 Metered charges

- *Usage of 6 cubic metres per pupil per year (i.e. 2.5 cubic meters above an average standard of 3.5 cubic metres)*

Water-only charge (6 x 250 x €0.97) + €5 **Total cost: €1,550**

or

Water and waste charge (6 x 250 x €2.16) + €5 **Total cost: €3,335**

- *If water usage is reduced to 3.5 cubic metres per pupil per year (average)*

Water-only charge (3.5 x 250 x €0.97) + €5 **Total cost: €43.75**

or

Water and waste charge (3.5 x 250 x €2.16) + €5 **Total cost: €1,985**

- *If water usage is reduced to 2.1 cubic metres per pupil per year (best practice)*

Water-only charge (2.1 x 250 x €0.97) + €5 **Total cost: €604.25**

or

Water & waste charge (2.1 x 250 x €2.16) + €5 **Total cost: €1,229**

Therefore, in this case, a school of 250 with higher than average water consumption could save up to **€2,106** per annum by introducing water conservation measures and achieving best practice standards.

Information on water conservation measures for schools may be found at www.energyeducation.ie. Circular 46/08 also details measures schools may undertake.

Applications for Water Conservation Grants are currently being processed; details of the successful applicants will be announced later this year

Matthew Ryan
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