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Qualifying conditions for our schemes change from time to time. Always check with your local Social Welfare Office or with Information Services to see if qualifying conditions have changed (see page 8 for contact details).

The information in this booklet is correct at the time of going to publication. This booklet is intended as a guide only, and is not a legal interpretation.

1. What is the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance?

The Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance helps towards the cost of uniforms and footwear for school children. The Scheme operates from June to September each year.

The Scheme offers help to school-going children for whom a Qualified Child Increase is payable and is paid as part of the Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA) Scheme.

The Allowance is not paid for foster children.

The Department of Social Protection will decide if you qualify for the Scheme.

2. How can I qualify?

The administrative arrangements for the 2011 scheme differ from the arrangements that applied in previous years. For the 2011 scheme most of the entitlements will be fully automated and payment will issue automatically to customers with no application form required from customers. These customers will receive a letter from the Department in mid-June telling them when and how their payment will be made.

It is expected that in excess of 80% of clients entitled to the allowance in 2011 will automatically receive the allowance without the need for an application form from the customer or for customers to contact the Department about their entitlement.

Payments to these customers will issue from the end of June 2011.

All other customers will be required to apply for the payment and the following rules and qualifying conditions will apply.

You **may** qualify if you [and the qualifying child(ren)] are living in the State and:

- 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 and satisfy the other conditions,
 - Back to Work Allowance (Employees) (BTWA),
 - Back to Work Enterprise Allowance (BTWEA),
 - Short-term Enterprise Allowance,
 - Community Employment,
 - Revenue Job Assist,
 - Community Services 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,
 - Rural Social Scheme, or
 - Tús.

and

- getting a Qualified Child Increase with your social welfare payment. Any child who this allowance is claimed for must be resident in the state,

and

- your household income is within the limits in either of the tables below. Household income includes:
 - your main social welfare or Health Service Executive payment,
 - income of any qualified children on Youthreach, and
 - other income including earnings before tax, but excluding PRSI and reasonable travelling expenses.

The Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance is paid to parents whose income limits are at or below the following amounts:

Couple with:	Income limit
1 child	€563.60
2 children	€593.40
3 children	€623.20
4 children	€653.00*
*Limit is increased by €29.80 for each additional child.	

Lone parent with:	Income limit
1 child	€410.10
2 children	€439.90
3 children	€469.70
4 children	€499.50**
**Limit is increased by €29.80 for each additional child.	

For the purposes of this scheme, we ignore income from Rent or Mortgage Interest Supplement, Family Income Supplement, Blind Welfare Allowance, home help, Domiciliary Care Allowance and Mobility Allowance. We also ignore any income from rehabilitative employment or training - up to €120 per week.

Special conditions

If you were entitled to the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance while getting a social welfare or Health Service Executive payment before starting one of the employment schemes listed on pages 4 and 5, you may still be able to get the allowance as long as your **gross household income is €317.43 a week** or less and you continue to satisfy the conditions of the scheme. We do not take into account income from BTWA or BTWEA for the purpose of the €317.43 weekly income limit.

If you do not qualify for the allowance under these 'special conditions', you can apply for it in the usual way and will be subject to the income limits on page 5 of this booklet.

Back to Education Allowance or VTOS

If you are getting Back to Education Allowance or taking part in VTOS, you can still get Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance, or if you now have a qualified child, apply for Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance, subject to the income limits on page 5 of this booklet.

3. How much is the allowance?

The allowance is:

- €200 in respect of eligible children aged 2-11 on or before 30th September 2011.
- €305 in respect of eligible children aged 12-22 on or before 30th September 2011.

4. How do I get my payment?

For customers entitled to receive the automatic payment you will be advised in writing in mid June as to how and when the payment is to be made.

Those applying to the Department for the payment will have the option of payment at a Post Office of your choice or directly to a bank account.

5. When and how do I apply?

Customers who do not receive an automatic payment will be required to complete an application form which will become available after 30th June 2011 from the following sources.

- <http://www.communitywelfareservice.ie/>
- <http://www.welfare.ie/>
- local offices of the Department of Social Protection
- local Health Centres
- or text “**form BTSCFA**” followed by your name and address to 51909.

Completed application forms together with supporting documentation should be returned to the:

Department of Social Protection,
PO Box 131,
Letterkenny,
Co.Donegal.

It may take a number of weeks to process applications.

6. What can I do if I am unhappy with the decision on my application?

If you are unhappy with the decision on your application, you should write to the:

BSCFA Review Section,
Department of Social Protection,
PO Box 131,
Letterkenny,
Co Donegal.

setting out the reason why you are not happy with the decision and asking that the claim be reviewed.

7. Where can I get more information?

For more information on the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance, contact your Local Social Welfare office or the local Community Welfare Office in your local Health Centre.

For information booklets, application forms and more information on social welfare services:

- Log on to www.welfare.ie.
- Log on to www.communitywelfareservice.ie.
- Text to **51909** (see details on Page 9).
- LoCall Information Line at **1890 66 22 44** (from the Republic of Ireland only).
- Drop in to your local Social Welfare Office or Citizens Information Centre.

Note

The rates charged for using 1890 (LoCall) numbers may vary among different service providers.

To request forms, text the form code followed by your name and address to 51909 (from the Republic of Ireland only). Standard text rates apply.

For example, if you wanted to request the Bereavement Grant form, text FORM BG MARY MURPHY 1 NEW STREET, OLD TOWN, CO. DONEGAL.

Social welfare payment or scheme	Form code
Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance	FORM BTSCFA
Bereavement Grant	FORM BG
Carer's Allowance	FORM CARA
Carer's Benefit	FORM CARB
Child Benefit (Form CB1)	FORM CHILD
Disability Allowance	FORM DA
Domiciliary Care Allowance	FORM DCA
Family Income Supplement	FORM FIS
Free Travel	FORM TRAVEL
Fuel Allowance	FORM FUEL
Household Benefits	FORM HHB
Invalidity Pension	FORM INV
Living Alone Increase	FORM LAA
Maternity Benefit	FORM MAT
One Parent Family Payment	FORM OPFP
Respite Care Grant	FORM RCG
State Pension (Non-Contributory)	FORM SPNC
State Pension (Transition/Contributory)	FORM SPC
Widow(er)'s/Surviving Civil Partner's Contributory Pension	FORM WCP
Widow(er)'s/Surviving Civil Partner's Non-Contributory Pension	FORM WNCP

Citizens Information

The Citizens Information Board is the statutory body which supports the provision of information, advice and advocacy on the broad range of social and civil services to the public. It provides the Citizens Information website and supports the voluntary network of Citizens Information Services and the Citizens Information Phone Service.

www.citizensinformation.ie

Lo-Call 1890 777 121 (Mon-Fri 9am-9pm)

Local Centres (see Golden Pages)

Citizen Information is available from over 250 locations nationwide. The contact details and opening hours of your nearest Citizens Information Centre are listed in the Golden Pages.