

## School Costs Survey 2012

We surveyed

# 987

parents

on the cost of:



Uniforms



Books



Shoes



'Voluntary' Contributions



The results, with parents' comments

have been sent to



the Minister & Dept of Education

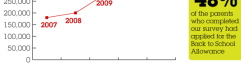
And the **key findings** are illustrated below, for you.

## 2012 Overview

Despite **some reductions** in costs, parents are **still struggling**.

### Back to School Allowance

The number of families applying for the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance has **grown each year since 2007**.



**48%**

of the parents who completed our survey had applied for the Back to School Allowance

### Reductions in the Back to School Allowance rate since 2011

Primary

**25%**

Secondary

**18%**

### Primary School:

Average cost for a child entering **Senior Infants**:

● = Total Cost

● = Back to School Allowance

**2011**

€350

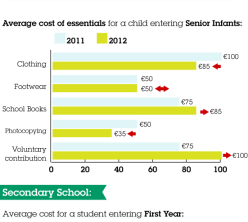
€300

**2012**

€355

€150

Average cost of essentials for a child entering **Senior Infants**:



### Secondary School:

Average cost for a student entering **First Year**:

● = Total Cost

● = Back to School Allowance

**2011**

€805

€305

**2012**

€770

€350

Average cost of essentials for a student entering **First Year**:



## Uniforms

A majority of parents reported that their school requires a uniform with a crest, which must be bought at extra expense from a specialist retailer.

Primary

**72%** crested uniform

9% no uniform

19% plain uniform

Secondary

**97%** crested uniform

1% no uniform

2% plain uniform

"My daughter is starting secondary school and her uniform is costing me €273. I'm very upset that the school cannot negotiate with the one supplier of their uniform to try and get costs down."

Parent's comment

## Books

School books are still the largest single expense for most parents.

Primary



Secondary



An ongoing problem is the inability to pass books between siblings due to different or additional books being chosen by the teacher, and a reliance on workbooks.

**Our Recommendation:**

Adopt a national policy, led by the Department of Education and Skills, under which schools will use their School Book Grant to incrementally build up a set of textbooks for all their pupils

Barnardos

## Voluntary Contributions

Primary

**65%**

Secondary

**76%**

of parents have been asked for a 'voluntary' contribution

"Voluntary contribution is not voluntary because the kids that do not pay get a different coloured letter a few months later to remind us to pay, so everyone knows we haven't paid and it is very embarrassing for the children."

"My daughter is starting secondary school and she has already told me that she won't get involved in any of the extra activities that they do so that I won't have to pay. It's terrible that at 12 years of age, my daughter is prepared to be left out of activities and not try new things at her new school so as to keep the costs down."

Comments from parents

For more findings from the 2012 School Costs Survey and recommendations from Barnardos

Read the detailed report at [www.barnardos.ie/schoolsurvey2012](http://www.barnardos.ie/schoolsurvey2012)

Barnardos would like to thank all the parents who took the survey and helped us to gather this valuable information.