



Circular 0064/2009

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

Implementation of full metered water charges from 1 January 2010

The management authorities of schools and VECs are reminded that the transition period to full metered water charges will come to an end with effect from 1 January 2010.

Schools can apply for funding for specified water conservation measures under the Summer Works Scheme for 2010. Full details are outlined in the governing Circular Letter for the Scheme (0057/2009). This, together with the application form (SWS 1) and guidance document WCMS 1/2009, is available on the Department's website www.education.ie, and on www.energyeducation.ie.

Water conservation and usage norms

Data received from local authorities indicates that water usage in schools in general remains excessive. For schools where usage remains at such levels, charges are expected to increase substantially.

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, in some cases above 20 cubic metres per pupil.

Each local authority sets its own rates. However, the example below is an illustration of the likely increase in water rates if schools do not undertake water efficiency measures, as previously outlined in Circular 46/08.

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: **€95** per year

Current 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) + €95 **Total cost: €1,550**

or

Water and waste charge (6 x 250 x €2.16) + €95 **Total cost: €3,335**

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

Water-only charge (3.5 x 250 x €0.97) + €95 **Total cost: €43.75**

or

Water and waste charge (3.5 x 250 x €2.16) + €95 **Total cost: €1,985**

- *If water usage is reduced to 2.01 cubic metres per pupil per year (best practice)*

Water-only charge (2.01 x 250 x €0.97) + €95 **Total cost: €82**

or

Water & waste charge (2.01 x 250 x €2.16) + €95 **Total cost: €1,180**

Therefore, a school with higher than average water consumption may save up to €2,155 per annum by introducing water conservation measures and achieving best practice standards. A school with average water consumption may save €805 per annum by introducing water conservation measures and achieving best practice standards.

It is a legal obligation on schools to pay water charges to local authorities. Schools are reminded that failure to discharge their liabilities may lead to legal action by the local authority to recover arrears.

Information on water conservation measures for schools and the Department's 2010 Summer Works Scheme may be found at www.energyeducation.ie.

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