

# OUR LADY OF MERCY SECONDARY SCHOOL

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## OLM BRS policy

### Background

Since 1988 OLM has operated a book rental scheme. Starting small, the scheme was gradually extended year-by-year. Now it supplies all the basic textbooks to pupils in all year-groups. The scheme is funded by annual contributions from parents and supported by a DES grant (currently €39 per pupil per year. The scheme involves a very significant amount of work behind-the-scenes, buying books, covering and registering new books, repairs, preparing their sets of books for pupils, etc. This work is carried out by our designated BRS team comprising teachers, support workers, and parent volunteers.

#### Abbreviations used

BRS – book rental scheme

DES – Department of Education & Skills

OLM – Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School

We estimate that the total value of the 3000+ books in the scheme at present is over €110,000, which is a very valuable resource for our school community. In 2012-13 we carried out a review of the scheme and bought a dedicated software package to better manage it into the future.

### Aim of the BRS scheme

**To ensure that all pupils will be facilitated in having necessary textbooks as and when needed, at a reasonable cost to their parents.**

We achieve this by:

- Keeping textbook changes to the absolute minimum. We aim to get as much use as we can out of every book we buy.
- Bulk-buying our books and negotiating the best discounts we can get. We source good-quality second-hand books where this is the best approach.
- Seeking to extend the life of each individual book in the scheme to secure the best possible return for parents & pupils.

We fit durable plastic covers to new books before

#### Benefit to parents

- The cost of a set of books is spread over a number of years, and does not have to be paid for in full at the start of 1<sup>st</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> year.
- If pupils change subjects or levels, their books can be exchanged at no extra cost.
- Buying in bulk, the school will generally get better discounts than an individual parent could.
- The school strongly supports the care of books, thereby prolonging their life.

#### Benefit to everybody

- All pupils start the year with all their books ready and in place, correct editions, etc.

they are put into circulation. We monitor the condition of books during the year and repair as needed. We provide lockers for pupils who wish to have one. We have had our software package specially modified to keep track of the condition of individual books. We encourage and incentivise pupils to take good care of their books. The support and involvement of parents is very important, especially in relation to that final point.

### **Rules of the Scheme**

The following terms and conditions apply to our BRS scheme:

1. **The scheme is entirely voluntary.** Book lists are supplied in June and parents remain free to source their own books if they wish.
2. **An Annual Rental charge** is payable each year. The rates are set by the Board of Management in May-June each year. This single payment will secure the rental of all relevant text books listed in the book-list as and when required throughout the school year. The rental charge is set each year to meet the costs of running the scheme.
3. **Membership of the scheme is at the discretion of the Principal.** Any student found to be abusing, defacing or disposing of rented books will be dismissed from the scheme and will be required to supply their own books for the remainder of their time in school.
4. **Re-admission to the scheme** in the second and subsequent years is conditional on the safe return of all books supplied in the previous year, or payment of compensation for books lost or damaged. Books must be returned before the end of the summer exams.
5. **If books are lost or damaged**, full compensation will be required before readmission to the scheme. Where compensation has to be paid, in fairness we take the condition of the book when marked out into account, and also the stage in the school year.<sup>1</sup>
6. Books supplied under the scheme **remain at all times the property of the school.** They will be subject to inspection at any time by a member of the teaching staff.
7. Books supplied under the scheme may be **new or second-hand** at the discretion of the Principal.
8. Purchase of **school stationery and disposable materials** remains the responsibility of parents. A list of all such materials with approximate prices is supplied to parents in May.

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<sup>1</sup> Where compensation is due the amount will be based on the current list price of the book, discounted by reference to the book's condition when marked out and the stage in the school year:

Condition when marked out	% of current full price of the book which will be payable	
	Replacement in the first term (up to Christmas)	Replacement after Christmas or at year-end
4 = new or as new	100%	80%
3 = good	80%	60%
2 = fair	60%	40%
1 = poor	40%	20%

**BRS operating committee**

A committee including representative from teachers, school support staff, parents and pupils will be established to assist in the operation of the scheme. The BRS exists to benefit pupils and their parents and is resourced mainly from parent contributions, supplemented by an annual grant from DES. The views and preferences of parents mainly will determine the future direction of the scheme.

All money relating to the BRS will be handled through the school's normal accounts. But receipts and payments will be recorded in such a way that the operating costs of the BRS can be separately identified

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*Chairperson of Board of Management*

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*Principal*

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of next review:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 1**

### **Annual timetable**

#### **Dec-Jan**

Parents of incoming 1<sup>st</sup> years are informed of the scheme and its approximate charges, when the offer of a place is being made.

#### **March/April**

Pupils select options for the following year. The composition of subject groups for all years should be known by April. Teacher subject-groups meet to decide text books for next year.

#### **May**

Final booklists for each year-group and subject are presented to the principal before end-May.

Booklists are sent to all parents, with details of charges for BRS for the coming year.

Parents are invited to join the scheme if they wish and to pay the annual fee.

#### **Late-May**

Books are collected back day-by-day during the course of the school exams.

#### **Early-June**

Similarly, books are collected back day-by-day during the State exams.

#### **May-June**

Stock-taking and checking condition of all returned books.

[Any necessary repairs/ re-covering/ etc is done over the summer holidays.]

Finalise lists of books that need to be purchased to bring stocks up to the required level.

Closing date for joining the scheme and pay the fee.

We need to know how many books are needed and have them ordered over the summer holiday, in place for the start of the new school year.

#### **Late-August**

Newly-bought books are added to the system, fitted with protective covers, etc. Sets of books are prepared for individual pupils, with an individual Contract for each pupil.

Books distributed at the start of term. Parents and pupils are invited to come to the school to collect their books on designated days. Individual Contracts signed.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Forms**

- Application Form to join the scheme, including accepting the conditions of the scheme. This should also briefly summarise the benefits of the scheme in a panel.
- Annual Contract
- Proposal to purchase a new textbook

- List of new books bought for the scheme and budget funds remaining

## Appendix 3

### Our own practices

- All of our school-owned “resources” will be registered under the system, or else under the asset register system.
- Resource will be marked out to individual pupils using BRS if either
  - (a) the pupil can take them out of the school or
  - (b) they are used continuously by the same pupil in the school.
- Classroom-based resources which are shared among pupils, without designated copies for individual pupils, will be marked out to the class teacher under BRS.
- We collect back all books at the end of the school year. This is for checking and any necessary repairs as well as for safe keeping over the summer.
- Sometimes a teacher will wish their students to retain a book over the summer (eg, a novel to be read). We will develop a procedure for such books to be returned for quick checking and repair at the end of term, and then marked out again for the holiday.
- We will continue our present practice of returning to pupils the same books as they had in the previous year, but we will keep this under review.
- When a pupil loses a book or damages it such that it has to be replaced, generally we will not ‘reward’ that pupil with a new book.
- “Teacher copies” supplied by book publishers remain the property of the school and will also be registered under the BRS.
- All teachers, including H.Dip students etc, will be supplied with books they need through the scheme.

In the case of key texts used regularly for in-class work, an extra copy may be marked out to the teacher on request – available for single-class loan to a pupil not having a book so that work will not be interrupted.

We will develop a simple classroom-based procedure to log these “short-term loans” so that they can be kept under review.

**Classroom Copy  
for single-class loan.**

Not to be removed  
from this classroom.

**NEW** *The principal may decide to supply a second set of books to enable a pupil to have both a school- and home-set of books; eg, to a pupil having a physical disability. This will be done discreetly and is not mentioned in the policy. All such books would be marked out to the pupil under BRS.*

### Book inspections

An inspection routine for 1<sup>st</sup> years will take place before mid-term during a weekly assembly in 2013

### “Repair clinics”

Repair not only over the summer, but also as required during the year. Develop some simple system to bring to notice any books requiring attention across all year-groups.

Arrange a short course for our own support staff (and any interested parent volunteers) on book binding and repair