



SCHOOL BOOK EXCHANGE

Every year in Ireland, over one million used college and school books are not re-used! Why not do the "green thing" and save yourself an average 66% on the price of school books by participating in a school book exchange?

Many schools operate such a scheme, check with your local school. If they don't currently facilitate book exchange, why not encourage them to consider putting something in place for next year.

A really simple approach in post primary schools would be to team up 3rd year students who have just completed the 3 year junior certificate cycle with an incoming 1st year student. This could be done as part of the "orientation" day that many secondary schools facilitate.

There is currently a campaign in Ireland asking schools to "freeze" the school book list, why not add your support by asking the principal and teachers in your school to do this? This would allow more school books to be re-used and also save a lot of money for families and will even generate cash for the seller. There are approximately 10 million college and school books in use and every year at least one million books are either dumped or not re-used.

There are many internet based book exchange companies and most towns and villages have book shops that carry 2nd hand books, why not talk to the owners and encourage them to create a school book corner if they don't already have one. If you have college or school books stored in the attic why not put them on free-trade Ireland, Dublin waste or even consider donating them to Kenya or Africa!

Buying new books should only be done as a last resort and many book supply companies pay a donation back to the school if you purchase from them, again ask in your local school if they have a preferred supplier of books to the school. School meal companies such as Carambola Kids are diversifying and supplying books and uniforms with financial benefits to the schools in the community. Local supermarkets such as Supervalu are also linking in with school book suppliers and offering discount.

How to Start a Book Exchange Programme at your School

Things You'll Need:

- School principal's approval
- Good condition curriculum &/or age appropriate books
- Love of children and books
- Time

Step 1

First and foremost approach the school's principal and ask permission to be a volunteer to run a book exchange programme in their school.

You will need to agree and set a suitable time e.g. during lunches twice a month or before school on Tuesday.

It's important to fit this into the school schedule and at the appropriate time of the school year. You also

need to be clear as to the purpose of the exchange: is it only for school curriculum books or is it an exchange for all books?

Step 2

Next, you need to find books in good condition. If the exchange is for all books then please be sure to ask people for books that are age appropriate for the school children who will be using the book exchange. You would be surprised how many people will send adult books to a children's exchange.

There are many places to find the books. First ask the teachers if they could find 10 books from their classroom library for children to use. Also send a flyer home reminding parents that their bookshelves may be overcrowded and that they could clear out books and create space for the new books their child will read this coming school year. Also ask if the school library will be discarding any books this year and would they please consider sending them to the book exchange.

Once the idea starts to catch on you will have more books than you can handle! If that is the case, consider regularly donating excess books to a local charity shop.

Step 3

With the time for the book exchange set and the inventory of books secured, now is the time to notify the students/parents and teachers of the event.

Send a well worded letter telling the parents about the exchange and how it will be of benefit to them.

All the child needs to do is bring a book on the set day and they may exchange it for another of their liking. They may then keep that book forever or read it and bring it in for a new one at the next book exchange. Once you are all set up the book exchange really runs itself.

If you are providing an exchange for school curriculum books you need to explain clearly how this will be facilitated. (and when)

Step 4

I know of one volunteer who runs a book exchange that who has in the past given the classroom teachers coupons to use at the book exchange. This is a way for the teacher to be able to give a book to a child who they know needs one or just as a reward for good behaviour or a great grade.

In one school the transition year students run the book exchange, and they feel ever so proud as they help the younger students select a book. (They also help students who have difficulty with their reading)

Go on... Try a book exchange at your school. You have nothing to lose and so much to be gained.

Good luck and happy reading!