

Managed Print Services (MPS) Guide for Schools

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Introduction

A Managed Print Service (MPS) is a comprehensive system or contract for managing a school's printing, faxing, scanning, and copier devices. Typically outsourced to a third-party company, MPS provides a cohesive structure by standardising the devices, often by using the same printer and copier models throughout the school premises. Documents printed through MPS are typically held in the device's memory until they are retrieved by the authorised user, often by entering a unique pin code. This approach allows for strategic placement of printers in common areas, facilitating easy access for teachers and staff. It also reduces the need for a variety of printer supplies, as most devices within the MPS framework share the same brand and model, making maintenance and supply stocking more efficient.

The benefits of MPS go beyond hardware standardisation. By implementing MPS, schools can achieve better visibility into their overall printing costs, which can be challenging when individual departments manage their own printing needs. MPS can lead to significant cost savings by automating processes, streamlining support, and reducing waste from incompatible or obsolete printer parts. Additionally, MPS improves document security and contributes to environmental sustainability by reducing waste and encouraging responsible printing practices. Ultimately, the centralised control and standardised approach of MPS offer schools a more efficient and cost-effective way to manage their printing infrastructure.

Advantages of an MPS

- **Total Cost Visibility** - Replaces unpredictable department budgets with a single, transparent invoice.
- **Reduced Administrative Waste** - Eliminates the need to stock a confusing array of different toner cartridges and spare parts.
- **Predictable Maintenance** - Includes automatic parts replacement, engineering labour, and emergency servicing under a single Service Level Agreement (SLA).
- **Enhanced Document Security** - Secure release features protect GDPR/sensitive student data and report cards.
- **Reduced Environmental Footprint** - Substantially drops paper and toner waste via forced double-sided printing and automatic job deletion for uncollected prints.

Details of a Managed Print Service

What is it?

It is a service which can:

- Monitor printing/copier devices to notify the print vendor that toner is low and consumables will be automatically sent to the school for the device.
- This could also manage/monitor users and the number of copies they make or limit their copying under particular criteria the school sets and agrees with the vendor.
- Can provide statistics on the number of B&W and/or colour copies for each device.
- Can send notifications to the MPS provider so as toner is dispatched to the school automatically.

How is the Service Managed?

- Usually managed through a **Server** on premise or cloud based **OR**
- If no server is available in a school, a local PC on the network can act as a Host server **OR**
- Users can print directly from a device to a printer (generally 3rd party software required here) **OR**
- Reports can be retrieved directly from the printing and copying devices

How is it Carried Out?

- Vendor specific software/3rd party software, some free some subscription based, is loaded onto a server which monitors all the devices. The server can be local (on premise) or cloud based or a school may use a PC as a host server (PC though would need to be left switched on), or some software can use “direct printing” from a device to a printer.
- Management can be as simple as monitoring usage so as toners are automatically dispatched and replenished to the “more detailed setup” of setting fixed allowances of copies per user, statistics of usage for each device and/or user and automatic notification to vendor to dispatch toners to the school.

Types of MPS Contracts

- Cost **per Page** price and pay only for what you use.
- Contracts with Print and Copy **Volume Commitments**.
- **Tiered Billing**.

Details

Cost per page – some schools can pay approx. 0.03-0.08 cent for B&W and 0.08-0.15 cent per page for colour. Schools should follow procurement practices i.e. check for an existing framework or seek quotations from at least 3 suppliers etc., as prices can vary greatly.

Monthly/Annual commitment copies – This is where a school “commits” to a fixed minimum number of copies. e.g. a school commits to use 125,000 copies but only uses at the end of the year 100,000 copies so may pay 25% more than they should. If you have a copier for a couple of years you can check the **machine counter ÷ number of years = annual number of copies**. This is a good indicator of what you need to commit to. Normally a vendor will audit existing printers and copiers and advise what a school needs to commit to.

Tiered billing – This is where you are charged different rates per page depending on the amount of toner the page uses. Charges may appear in the most expensive tier for a lot of your copying and how do you go about proving this after the fact – needs to be very clearly understood and interpreted with the vendor.

Finance Agreements with an MPS

A good way to spread cost but consider:

- Third Party Finance company **versus**
- Finance direct with equipment supplier.

Details

Finance – If financing/leasing large copier/printers ensure you understand the terms of the contract, length of contract (months/years), exit options or penalties etc. and interest rates. Also be aware of whether the company is regulated by the Financial Regulator.

Checklist for good practice for an MPS

1. Decide on the type of MPS that fits your school i.e. manages consumables only, or also manages users, limits copies per user etc.

NOTE: Most MPS vendors will conduct an audit of your current usage with current printers/scanners/copiers and provide options for a complete new MPS system or phased in MPS system. Ultimately the vendor should

- Audit and Evaluate current usage, costs etc.
 - Provide advice re Changes and what that would mean i.e. change in print devices/copiers, and the costs, etc.
 - Implementation of the new MPS System inc. training etc.
 - Show Improvement in TCO to the school
 - Review & Optimise
2. Choose a quality product and a provider with a good track record with schools.
 3. Seek references from other similar sized schools from the providers.
 4. Choose a cost type that suits your needs i.e. cost per page, volume commitment, tiered billing.
 5. Consider what technical support is included i.e. same day, next business day and hours etc.
 6. Consider the finance options to ensure the contract is clear, time “locked in to it, any additional support costs etc. and if the company providing the finance is regulated by the Financial Regulator.
 7. Where you already have a number of printers, consider, when purchasing or replacing these to introducing an **MPS** on a phased basis and eventually phasing out stand-alone printers of various makes and models which can be difficult, time consuming and costly to manage.

ECO Printing

Eco printing refers to a sustainable printing solution. These printers are designed with technologies aimed at reducing environmental impact, incorporating features such as energy efficiency, paper conservation with duplex printing and utilising recycled materials in its construction.

When looking for an eco-friendly printer, there are several specifications and features to consider ensuring that it meets your sustainability goals. Here are some key factors to look for:

Energy Efficiency	Consider a printer that is ENEREGY STAR rated or has energy saving features such as sleep mode when not in use.
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Ink/Toner Efficiency	Many newer printers have features like eco-friendly refill tanks or high yield cartridges which minimise waste and the need for regular cartridge replacements.
Duplex Printing	Choose printers that have automatic duplex (double-sided) printing to reduce paper consumption.
Recycled Materials	Some printers are made with recycled materials or have recyclable components, reducing the environmental impact.
Low Emissions	Look for printers with low ozone emissions.
Eco-Certifications	Choose printers that have eco-labels or certifications such as EPEAT (Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool). This is an environmental rating and global registry identifying greener electronic equipment.

Other considerations to reduce cost/improve efficiency

- Set a B&W printer as the Primary Printer as opposed to the Colour Printer where possible.
- Even when purchasing smaller printers, add them to the MPS.
- Consider using Pin codes and mailbox printing to reduce waste.
- Set printers to print in Duplex (both sides of the page) or multiple pages per sheet where possible.
- Consider the paper quality and cost being used.
- Remote management of consumables & service ensures you are never without consumables or overstocking on consumables which may be “wasted” if the printer reaches end of life before all the inventory is used up.

For additional queries on MPS schools can email ictadvice@oide.ie