



The KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards Policy

KPMG

Children's
BOOKS
Ireland
Awards





children's
books
ireland
every child a reader

Children's Books Ireland/Leabhair Pháistí Éireann

receives financial assistance from

The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon,

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Dublin 2, Ireland

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funding
the arts

Date policy first drafted:

1990

Date policy last updated:

May 2024

Date policy due for update:

May 2027



The KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards Policy

CHILDREN'S BOOKS IRELAND

www.childrensbooksireland.ie



POLICY INTENT

This policy incorporates all rules and regulations that relate to the KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards. It includes the framework for implementing the KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards and the application process.

DESCRIPTION OF THE AWARDS

The KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards (formerly the CBI Book of the Year Awards/Bisto Book of the Year Awards/ Children's Books Ireland Awards) have been running since 1990 and are the leading children's book awards in Ireland. The awards are made annually by Children's Books Ireland to authors and illustrators who were born in Ireland, are permanently resident in Ireland or are citizens of Ireland and are open to books written in Irish or English. The shortlist for the awards is announced annually in Belfast in February, and the winners are announced in Dublin in May, in partnership with the International Literature Festival Dublin.

The KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards identify, honour, and promote excellence in books for young people by Irish authors and illustrators. The awards are the most prestigious in Ireland and offer one of the few opportunities for national and international recognition of Irish authors and illustrators.

Excellence in children's books is the over-arching criterion.

In 2026, the KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards celebrate thirty-six years.

REVIEW

This KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards Policy is reviewed every three years by a panel of invited experts. Any suggested amendments arising from this panel will be presented to the board of Children's Books Ireland who will approve the amendments.

The KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards Submission Procedure and the KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards Entry Form are reviewed annually by the Children's Books Ireland Executive.

To be ratified by the Children's Books Ireland Board: 20th May 2024

Signed:

Date: 20th May 2024

(Madeleine Keane, Children's Books Ireland Chair)

THE AWARDS	A total of six awards are made: <u>Awarded by the judging panel:</u> The Book of the Year Award – €6,000 The Eilís Dillon Award for a first children’s book – €2,000 The Honour Award for Fiction – €2,000 The Honour Award for Illustration – €2,000 The Judges’ Special Award – €2,000 <u>Awarded by young people who have taken part in the Junior Juries’ Programme:</u> The Junior Juries’ Award – €2,000 In the case of titles with more than one creator, the award amount will be split evenly.
CRITERIA FOR EXCELLENCE	1. Literary/artistic – an excellent children’s book is extremely well conceived, structured, and written or illustrated (or both). 2. Respect – an excellent children’s book appeals to an audience of children or young people, without patronising or exploiting that audience. 3. Engagement – an excellent children’s book entertains and engages the sustained interest of its intended readers. 4. Experience – an excellent children’s book offers its readers a stimulating and satisfying aesthetic, imaginative, intellectual, or emotional experience that goes beyond the banal and the obvious, and develops or challenges the reader’s inner life, sense of self, or understanding of and engagement with the world. While design and production will be given due consideration, such issues will not weigh substantially against a book that is otherwise outstanding, especially in the case of a book that is not illustrated.
ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	From the March before the awards are announced, book publishers are invited to submit titles for consideration, provided all eligibility criteria are met: 1. Books must be a first edition, published between 1st January and 31st December of the previous year, i.e., books to be considered for 2027 awards must be published between 1st January and 31st December 2026, and must be submitted by the stated deadline in order to be considered. 2. Books may be published in Ireland or abroad but must be widely available within the Irish market i.e., have clearly detailed distribution. 3. Authors or illustrators must be born or permanently resident in Ireland (all island) or holders of Irish citizenship. To qualify, authors or illustrators must hold a current valid Irish passport or be able to demonstrate full-time residency or citizenship. 4. Books must be written for children or young people, i.e., for readers up to eighteen years of age. 5. Books must be submitted to these awards within 2 months of their publication. 6. Books must be currently widely available in bookshops in Ireland and available for purchase by the general public. Details of distribution must be completed on the entry form. 7. Books must meet basic professional standards of publishing and printing. Editing must be professional with conventions of spelling and grammar upheld. All titles must have a valid ISBN number.

	8. Books may be in English or Irish. 9. Books may be fiction, non-fiction, or poetry. 10. Books by a deceased creator will be deemed eligible if published within five years of the death of the artist. These details must be provided on entry. 11. Books written as part of a series or published in serial format will be judged as separate entities which must be able to stand alone as a complete work in their own right. Each must have an independent structure and not rely on the reader having knowledge of other parts of the series. 12. Academic textbooks, translations and re-issues are not eligible. However, a new iteration of a previously judged text will be eligible if a living Irish creator is involved e.g., graphic novelisation of a book by an Irish author. 13. Anthologies are eligible at the discretion of the Judging Panel, provided they are primarily of Irish content, i.e., editor, contributors etc. Note 1: These awards are for literary and artistic excellence; publishers should only submit books they deem to be outstanding in this regard. Note 2: Children's Books Ireland reserves the right to include or exclude any titles for the awards. Note 3: Children's Books Ireland reserves the right to ask the publisher for supplementary information to determine eligibility. Note 4: Children's Books Ireland is not in a position to return books to the publisher.
SUBMISSION PROCEDURE	Publishers must complete an entry form for <i>each</i> title submitted. Entry forms will be issued to publishers when a first callout is made by Children's Books Ireland early in the year preceding the awards. Entry forms can also be found enclosed in this document. All sections of the form must be completed and accompanied by sixteen copies of each book. Publishers are encouraged to submit books as early as possible after the callout to ensure that the judges have sufficient reading time. Books must be submitted to these awards within 2 months of their publication i.e. a title published on 12th April 2026 must be received by Children's books Ireland no later than 12th June 2026. Titles submitted on publication is preferred. Books must reach an address nominated by Children's Books Ireland no later than the specified date – 30th September of the year preceding the awards announcement. Late or incomplete submissions will not be accepted. Forms can also be obtained by contacting publications@childrensbooksireland.ie
JUDGING PANEL	Each year Children's Books Ireland selects a Chair for the awards, and in conjunction with them, assembles a panel of judges who have considerable expertise and interest in books for children. The panel is composed of experts in various fields, and they are given absolute authority to judge, longlist, shortlist and choose winners from the submitted books.

	The panel should be not less than seven judges and not more than twelve, to include four with an appropriate level of Irish, three with expertise in fiction and three with expertise in illustration/picturebooks. The panel should also include two young judges – they are usually transition year students with an interest in reading and the ability to articulate their opinion on the books. One of these young judges must be fluent in Irish. Children’s Books Ireland strives to have an international judge on the panel where budget allows and providing that a suitable individual can be identified and is available to participate. In some instances, judges may have expertise in more than one area. Judges may opt out of discussing particular titles if such titles fall outside of their identified areas of expertise. Judges are either invited to the panel or there may be a public callout for certain areas of expertise. Judges should fulfil some of the following requirements: • Demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of the field of children’s literature, • Hold a recognised qualification in the field of children’s literature, • Display awareness of illustration techniques and media, visual literacy, design, writing styles and editing as they relate to children’s literature, • Be a member of the target market of the books being judged i.e., a child or young person. Individuals can complete three years on the panel, either as a judge or as Chair or a combination of the two (e.g., two years as a judge and one as Chair). These years need not be consecutive. A gap of three years away from the panel must be observed before a judge or Chair is free to serve a further three years, either consecutive or non-consecutive. If a judge has served non-consecutive years, this gap will be counted from their last year serving on the panel. Six years in total will be the maximum term that any one person can be a member of the judging panel either as a Chair or judge, or a combination of the two. The Chair is not an active judge but has a casting vote. There is no requirement for the Chair to be fluent in Irish. It is the Chair’s responsibility to clearly articulate the criteria of excellence at every meeting, and to ensure that it is clear to the judges that excellence does not equal popularity or educational value. A Judging Administrator, who may be a member of the Children’s Books Ireland executive, will also attend each meeting but will not contribute to the discussion nor will they have a vote. They are however free to answer questions and clarify queries with regard to eligibility criteria, the rules and regulations and judging procedures as outlined in this policy document. Judges must attend all meetings, dates of which will be agreed in advance with all judges. In the event that a judge cannot attend a prearranged meeting date they must contact the Judging Administrator as soon as possible. Judges must attend the meetings with their notes and be prepared to speak to offer their opinions to their fellow judges on the panel. If for any unplanned reason a judge is unavailable to attend a meeting, their notes should be submitted to the Judging Administrator in advance.
CONFLICTS OF INTEREST	Children’s Books Ireland makes every effort to identify potential conflicts of interest during the selection of the judging panel and avoids inviting any person to act as a judge where a clear conflict exists, for example where a potential judge has been involved in the development, editing or publishing of an eligible book, or an eligible

	author or illustrator is the partner/spouse, immediate family member or close friend of a potential judge. However, it is inevitable in a small book publishing market that certain judges will have connections to authors, illustrators or publishing houses whose books are eligible for the awards. Judges are responsible for maintaining the highest ethical and professional standards. They must be especially sensitive to conflict-of-interest situations as well as the appearance of impropriety, and should immediately disclose to the Chair, the Judging Administrator and, during discussions at meetings, the other judges, any relationships they have with an author or illustrator whose work is under consideration for the awards. In some cases, a judge may not realise that a conflict of interest exists until they receive and review the books for judging. In such instances the judge must immediately alert the Chair of the panel and the Judging Administrator. If the Chair has a conflict of interest, they must declare it to the Judging Administrator. In the case that the Chair must absent themselves from discussions, the Judging Administrator will Chair the judging panel. A conflict of interest must be declared where close personal or professional connection, relationship or association exists between a judge and the author or illustrator of an eligible book. An ‘interest’ is either ‘pecuniary’ or ‘non-pecuniary’ (e.g., familial relationships, or partners, formal or informal business partnerships, personal friendships etc.) and can be either financial or non-financial in nature. In determining if something represents a conflict, it is also important to consider the following tests: - i Could the ‘interest’ be reasonably expected to influence the judge’s judgement or decision? - ii How would the judge’s judgement as it applies to the ‘interest’ be perceived by an outside observer? The Chair may, at their discretion, ask a judge to leave the room/mute their microphone and exempt themselves from discussing or voting on a particular book if the judge’s connection to its author or illustrator could be perceived as a conflict of interest and could be damaging to the integrity of the awards and the reputation of Children’s Books Ireland. In extreme cases, a judge may be asked to step down from the judging panel. Any questions regarding conflicts of interest should be referred to the Chair.
SELECTION PROCESS	At each monthly reading stage, judges receive on average between twenty-five and thirty books which may be discussed at the following meeting. Judges must read and evaluate each book, making detailed written notes. Judges’ notes must be made available to the Judging Administrator if a judge is unable to attend a meeting. Judges do not need to bring books to the following meeting: copies of the titles under discussion will be available in Children’s Books Ireland or via the Judging Administrator. In advance of each meeting, the Judging Administrator asks judges to indicate any books which can be set aside without discussion, i.e., books that judges believe do not meet the criteria of excellence. If all judges agree unanimously that a book can be set aside, it will be removed and may not be discussed. If a judge is unable to judge a book for any reason, they should notify the Judging Administrator and the Chair. At each meeting, the Chair will invite contributions from judges about a particular title. It is essential that all judges always keep details of meetings entirely confidential. No judge should discuss their preferences, or the preferences of other

	panel members, with anyone outside the judging panel at any stage during or after the judging process. At each meeting the judges debate the books they have read and discount any which they universally agree should be removed from further consideration. At the conclusion of each meeting, the judges will agree a selection of titles to be carried forward for discussion. In the event that the panel reach deadlock and cannot reach an agreement about a particular title, the Chair shall have the casting vote. The Judging Administrator will keep a record of these decisions. Those books that have been carried over from each meeting form the basis of what will become the longlist, which is discussed at the final meeting. At this meeting the longlist is further refined to reach a list of up to ten titles that create the shortlist. Judges' meetings may take place in person in the offices of Children's Books Ireland or a nominated venue, or online via a video conferencing platform.						
JUDGES' FINAL MEETING – VOTING AND AWARDS	At the final meeting, the judges choose the longlist, and the shortlist as well as the winners of each award. Details of the procedure to be followed at the final meeting will be discussed with the judges in advance. <i>Final meeting procedure</i> The following steps are taken at the final judges' meeting in order to arrive at the longlist, the shortlist and the final awards. <i>Step 1</i> Judges begin their final meeting with a carried forward list, which consists of books that the judging panel has selected to be brought forward from their previous meetings. The judging panel reviews all eligible titles and assesses them according to the criteria for the awards. Each book is discussed briefly before a number of books are eliminated. The decision to eliminate books at this stage is decided by a show of hands; a majority of the judging panel must be in favour of elimination in order for this to happen. The panel must work their way towards a longlist of up to 20 titles and no less than 18. <i>Step 2</i> At this stage the Chair will encourage discussion on the titles on the longlist and urge individuals to make the case for each of the titles. If this process does not lead the panel to ten shortlisted titles, they will then move to <i>Step 3</i>. If they have achieved a shortlist of ten, that all judges are happy with, <i>Step 3</i> can be skipped, moving on to <i>Step 4</i>. <i>Step 3</i> Judges may be asked to score each of the shortlisted books using pre-agreed scoring guidelines below. Or more likely by panel agreement decide via discussion. <table border="1"> <tr> <td>1–20</td><td>Very poor quality, offering little to the reader.</td></tr> <tr> <td>21–40</td><td>Some engaging elements but ultimately unsatisfactory and flawed throughout.</td></tr> <tr> <td>41–50</td><td>Competent text and/or illustration though lacks appeal and engagement with the reader.</td></tr> </table>	1–20	Very poor quality, offering little to the reader.	21–40	Some engaging elements but ultimately unsatisfactory and flawed throughout.	41–50	Competent text and/or illustration though lacks appeal and engagement with the reader.
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	51–60	Competent and well-conceived though with flaws. Reasonable quality of text and illustration. Limited appeal to and engagement with reader.
	61–70	High quality of text and/or illustration. Concept and execution are competently handled. Appeals to readers and engages with them but not comprehensively.
	71–80	Very high-quality text and/or illustration. Very well executed and conceived but includes some small flaws.
	81–90	Excellent conceived and executed though with some minor lapses in quality of text and illustration. Engaging for the reader in the most part but does not succeed in offering the exceptional and lasting experience sought by the awards.
	91–100	Truly outstanding quality of text and/or illustration. Flawless in concept and execution. Offers the reader a lasting and exceptional experience.
Scores for each book are averaged, paying due attention to titles which were not judged by all the panel, e.g., Irish language titles. The titles are then listed from highest score to lowest and judges are presented with a ranked list with exact scores removed, for reference purposes. <i>Step 4</i> The Chair invites nominations for each of the awards. Where more than one title is nominated for an award, the nominator is asked to put forward the reasons for their choice and each nomination is debated. After sufficient discussion, the judges vote for their choice in each category, again paying due attention to books where not every judge could vote. No award will be made if the judging panel deems that no eligible book has reached an appropriate standard of excellence. All awards are made entirely at the discretion of the judging panel. The Eilís Dillon Award is given for a first children's book; if the author or illustrator has published another book which is not intended for a young audience, this will not render an author or illustrator ineligible for this award. There is no obligation for the Book of the Year Award winner to be chosen from among the winners of the other awards. <i>Step 5</i> The ranked list is consulted to create a shortlist. The judging panel may choose up to ten books for inclusion on the shortlist, but they are not obliged to list ten if they feel that fewer than ten books meet the criteria of excellence. The longlist is announced in January, the shortlist is announced in February and the winners in May. The contact given by the publisher will be notified if their book is longlisted or shortlisted, and authors and illustrators may also be contacted directly by Children's Books Ireland, but it is the <u>publisher's</u> responsibility to contact the artists directly. If a book is shortlisted, publishers are required to provide <u>forty complimentary copies</u> of each shortlisted title for promotional purposes upon notification of the shortlisting. Publishers must be able to guarantee that submitted titles will continue to be in print and available at the time of shortlisting and not only during the submission process.		
JUNIOR JURIES	The Junior Juries' Programme provides a unique way for school/library/book club groups to engage with the KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards. Between the shortlist announcement and the deadline for Junior Juries' nominations to be submitted, all juries will be fully supported by Children's Books Ireland by phone and email. Comprehensive packs, including activities and resources relating to the shortlisted books, will be sent to each participating group. Joining Junior Juries is	

	free of charge. Each group chooses which of the shortlisted titles they will read. They may read as many or as few books as they like; some groups may choose not to read certain books for reasons related to availability of books, language (in the case of Irish language books), language level, themes, or the time available in which to read the books. Each group reads and debates their chosen shortlisted titles and completes a detailed ballot form to be returned to Children's Books Ireland before the specified deadline, including their agreed score for each book on the shortlist. Groups must indicate if they have not read any title. Scores for each book are averaged to decide the Junior Juries' Award winner. More detailed information can be found on our website in the Junior Juries' FAQs document.
AWARDS CEREMONY	The running order for the awards ceremony is as follows: 1. Honour Award for Fiction 2. Honour Award for Illustration 3. Eilís Dillon Award 4. Judges' Special Award 5. Junior Juries' Award 6. Book of the Year Award
OPTIONS FOR INVOLVEMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE	Groups of young people who have participated in the Junior Juries are always invited to take part in the ceremony. There are a number of ways in which these groups can be involved, and this may change from year to year: • Audience members at the ceremony • Young readers as presenters of the Junior Juries' Award • Citation from young readers for the Junior Juries' Award • Shortlist citations composed and read by young readers. • Author/illustrator events with attending groups in the lead up to and during the week of the ceremony • Meet and greet with the shortlistees after ceremony. • Pre-recorded video footage of groups discussing their experience of shadowing • Junior Juries corporate volunteer school workshops

	NOTES ON JUDGING
GENERAL NOTES ON JUDGING	Judges are encouraged to read all of the submitted titles in their entirety. However, if a judge feels at any time, after they have given sufficient time to a title, that they do not deem a book to have met the threshold of 'excellence' they may discontinue their reading of the title, and make a note of that.
NOTES ON JUDGING BOOKS WITH MORE THAN ONE CREATOR	In some cases, only one of two or more creators of a book meet the eligibility criteria: Irish-born, permanently resident in Ireland or a citizen of Ireland. In these cases, the contribution of the Irish collaborator makes the book eligible as a whole, and the judges may consider the book in its entirety rather than attempting to delineate and judge separately the contributions of each artist. In the case of the Eilís Dillon Award for a first children's book, the Honour Award for Fiction, and the Honour Award for Illustration, only an Irish artist will be eligible to win. The Eilís Dillon Award may be awarded to an Irish author or illustrator working in collaboration with an artist who has previously published work for

	children if the judging panel is confident that the Irish début artist's contribution is strong enough to merit winning the award. In the case of The Book of the Year Award, the judges must judge the book as a whole, regardless of the nationality and therefore eligibility of the artists, provided at least one of the artists is eligible. In the case of a book created by an Irish artist with a non-Irish artist, the book would be awarded the The KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards and both artists would receive an award. Any prize money would be split equally between all contributing artists. The Junior Juries' Award and Judges' Special Award will also function in this way.
JUDGING ILLUSTRATED TEXTS	How image and text work together should be taken into account in assessing potential award winners. Images that accompany written text but do not add a great deal to the interpretation of the narrative may be considered for their artistic quality alone. A picturebook must have a collective unity of storyline, theme, or concept, developed through the series of pictures of which the book is comprised. • There must be a consistent quality of illustration throughout the book • The artistic style, artistic elements of colour, line, shape, and texture must match to the written text or idea. • The illustrations in the book should help to fully engage the reader who can identify with characters • The illustration should display excellence of execution in the artistic technique employed • The illustration should display excellence of pictorial interpretation of story, theme, or concept The illustrations should be fully entwined with all the text on the page and this should enhance or augment the storyline. The layout of the illustrations should provide a balance of space and text.
JUDGING NON-FICTION TEXTS	• When documenting factual materials, the information presented must show accuracy of data and the current state of knowledge and demonstrates accurate research. • All tables, diagrams and graphs are clear. • In the case of information books, how accurate and clear are the illustrations • There should be integration of text, graphics, and illustrations to engage interest and enhance understanding of the topic at a high standard. • The layout must be clear, and consideration given to how the reader obtains the information from the page. • Indexing, glossary, timeline, or bibliography should be accurate.

GUIDELINES FOR BOOK PUBLISHERS

Follow these **five steps** to submit a title for these awards:

STEP 1	Read the The KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards Policy for details about the awards, eligibility criteria, assessment process etc.
STEP 2	Read the below notes pertaining to revised submission procedures in 2026: • titles can only be read and judged in hardcopy, pdf's <u>will not</u> be accepted • titles must be submitted on publication or within 2 months of publication. Titles published between January 2026 and June 2026 must be submitted for judging by 26th June and will not be accepted after this date this unless with prior agreement • titles published between July 2026 and 30th September 2026, must be submitted for judging by 30th September • for all titles publishing after 30th September, please contact Ruth Concannon at publications@childrensbooksireland.ie to make a submission plan • you must submit 16 copies per title.
STEP 3	Complete all sections of the submission form and submit to Ruth Concannon at publications@childrensbooksireland.ie
STEP 4	Please dispatch submissions as soon as possible • submissions should be sent to: Ruth Concannon, Publications Manager KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards, 17 North Great Georges Street, Dublin 1, D01 R2F1 IRELAND +353 1 8727475 EORI Number: EI6552405K • submissions without a <u>completed submission form per title</u> will be deemed ineligible (these can be emailed to publications@childrensbooksireland.ie) • please adhere to the schedule laid out in Step 2 • <u>please submit as soon as possible to aid the judging process.</u>
STEP 5	If shortlisted, publishers must <u>contact all artists directly</u> and submit 40 copies of the shortlisted title/s within two weeks of notification to the address below or another nominated address.

DEADLINES

Publishers are encouraged to submit titles as early as possible to ensure that members of the judging panel have sufficient reading time. Reading begins in April 2026.

Books must reach Children's Books Ireland – or nominated recipient address/s by 30th **September 2026, unless prior agreement has been reached.** Late submissions and/or incomplete submissions will not be accepted.

If this date falls on a weekend or statutory holiday, the deadline moves to the next business day.

For further Information, please contact:

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Children's Books Ireland
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The KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards 2026 Entry Form

Please review The KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards Policy before submitting any title

Title	
Author (Please attach biography)	
Illustrator (Please attach biography)	
Publisher	
Date of publication	

Who is eligible for the individual awards? Author (only) ☐ Illustrator (only) ☐ Both ☐
 Is this the first children's book by ... Author (only) ☐ Illustrator (only) ☐ Both ☐

I confirm that _____ (author) and/or _____ illustrator is Irish by birth, citizenship, or residency in Ireland. Proof of citizenship or proof of address must be available upon request.

I confirm that this title has been published for the first time in Ireland and/or abroad between 1st January 2026 and 31st December 2026.

I confirm that this title is currently available in Ireland and will continue to be in print and available at the time of shortlisting (please give details of distribution and outlets)

I agree to be bound by the terms and conditions of the The KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards.

Signed: _____ Print Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Date: _____

Please contact Children's Books Ireland on +353 1 8727475 or publications@childrensbooksireland.ie if you have any queries. Children's Books Ireland reserve the right to include/exclude any titles for the awards.

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