In a press conference held this morning, councilor of Education, Culture and Local Patrimony of the Formentera Island Council, Sònia Cardona, rolled out the list of educational subsidies available in Formentera. Comprising the list is a combined total of 104,750€ in financial aid.

The aid includes money for textbook purchases for early-childhood, primary and secondary studies. Some of this money is directly available to the families of students while another portion comes in the form of grants for public schools. Additional assistance – in the form of travel cost reimbursements and scholarships – is also available to students of technical programmes, university degrees, or other higher education options.

Help with textbook purchases

Government assistance is available both to those educational centres on the island that implement the textbook re-use programme and to Formentera students of early-childhood, primary and secondary education. Several Formentera schools submitted applications for just this sort of assistance, and what resulted was a proposed financial aid package that allocated 70€ per student toward the purchase of primary school textbooks, and 90€ per student for students of the IES Marc Ferrer high school. As for individually-requested assistance packages, families with students in early-childhood education will have 50% of their total textbook bill covered by financial subsidies, while members of both large families and single-parent families will receive assistance covering 100% of their textbook bills.

The Formentera Council has allocated 60,000€ for this year's package of educational subsidies. Grants will be awarded on a competitive basis; the objective being to promote solidarity and a cooperative use of textbooks and learning material in the different courses of mandatory education.

Textbook assistance is given chiefly to boost the Council's participation in the fund for used textbooks in public schools. It is also a way to maintain subsidies for households with the 'large' and 'single-parent' status.

Formentera is among the islands in the Balearics with the highest participation in the textbook re-use programme. Last year, 497 students from primary schools in La Mola, Sant Ferran, Sant Francesc and the island's secondary school took part. All four of Formentera's public primary schools have signed on to the programme, and in the case of CP Sant Ferran, student participation is 100%.

These educational subsidies can be requested on-line on the Formentera Island Council's website, www.consellinsulardeformentera.cat, or in person at the Citizen Information Office (Oficina d'Atenció Ciutadana, or OAC) until 21 May.

Educational grants and travel subsidies

Students currently in university or post-graduate programmes in places other than Formentera can request financial aid for travel costs and in the form of educational grants. A total of 36,000€ is available for individual assistance in the form of travel subsidies and 8,750€ for seven educational grants for university students.

The per student sum of aid for travel costs is 450€ for those students attending university outside the Pitiüsa Islands and 150€ for students of universities in Eivissa. Included in this category are all those students attending university, participating in technical programmes and completing A-levels (baccalaureate) in Art. In the year 2013 a total of 89 students availed to these subsidies: 12 who were studying in Eivissa and the remainder studying outside the Pitiüses.

The Office of Culture awards a total of 8,750€ in the form of educational scholarships to cover tuition and materials, in this way fomenting the pursuit of higher education among Formentera youth and contributing to their professional training. The scholarships are 1,250€ each and are given based on family income and academic performance. In 2013 applicants totalled 32. More information about these financial aid options can be found on the Council's website, www.consellinsulardeformentera.cat and applications will be accepted by the Citizen Information Office (OAC) until 21 May.

Formentera's Office of Education continues working to establishing ways to compensate for the educational isolation affecting island residents, correcting inequalities and imbalances between students from Formentera and those from the rest of the autonomous community and Spanish territory.