



**WHERE WE BELONG;
WHERE WE REACH
OUR POTENTIAL**



Getting it Right for Families at RBA

Supporting families with the cost of the school day

RESPECT | ACHIEVEMENT | EQUITY

Introduction and Rationale

At Robert Burns Academy (RBA) we are fully committed to supporting all of our children and families to feel included in every aspect of school life and feel part of the school community. We consistently promote equity across all areas of the school and aim to ensure that all young people have equal opportunities to become *successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens*.

More than 1 in 4 children across Scotland are officially recognised as living in poverty. Consequently, RBA continues to monitor the resources pupils need for school and the cost of the school day in order to ensure that none of our young people are at risk of missing out on opportunities or feel in any way disadvantaged, excluded or unhappy. Staff are sensitive to the issues and challenges that families face, particularly families affected financially by Covid-19 and the increasing cost of living. We encourage parents to inform Pupil Support Staff if they are experiencing financial difficulty in any matter. This will be treated in the strictest confidence and staff will do all they can to offer support. Contact details can be found at the end of this document.

Uniform

Wearing school uniform promotes a sense of identity and belonging to the school community, helps boost young people's self-esteem, reduces bullying, helps us identify potential intruders and is cost effective for families. At RBA we place great importance on high standards of uniform. Our current uniform is black trousers/skirt, white shirt, tie and black footwear for S1-4 pupils. Black trousers/skirt, black shirt, tie and black footwear for S5-6 pupils. We also encourage all pupils to wear a blazer.

We urge all eligible families to apply for the School Clothing Grant via the following link.

<https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/CouncilAndGovernment/Benefits/Benefits-EducationAndSchool/Clothing-grants-and-free-school-meals/Clothing-grants-and-free-school-meals.aspx>

The link to this is also available on the school website.

Blazers and ties can be purchased from Donsport or Kenny's Kilts in Cumnock, Just Jeans in Auchinleck and Blu Design in Mauchline. We also have a supply of recycled uniform items including blazers in school that are available for pupils. Please contact your child's Principal Teacher of Guidance to enquire about this.

We encourage parents to donate uniform they no longer require to the school to support families in need. We kindly ask that items that are still of good quality are handed in to main reception in a bag and are recently washed.

We understand that some families may require further financial assistance in addition to the School Clothing Grant. Once a term, we contact all families to allow them to request items of uniform. RBA has pledged further funds to be able to support families with uniform throughout the school year.

We hope to introduce the Warm Winter project again soon. This facility ensures that all young people have a warm winter jacket. The local community are encouraged to donate jackets and these are distributed to children that need them.

Learning

Families are not required to pay for any learning activities. Consumable materials used in subjects such as Technical, Art, Science and Home Economics are paid for out of departmental budgets. We believe that all pupils should experience every opportunity to learn and not be disadvantaged by finances.

All subjects provide learning resources for all young people including jotters, paper and textbooks. We encourage pupils to bring their own stationery where possible but the school is happy to provide these.

Every subject department has an inclusion toolkit which contains a range of resources to support young people with additional support needs (ASN). The toolkits have items such as coloured paper, wide grip pencils, ear defenders, fidget toys and overlays. Please contact the Principal Teacher of Support for Learning if you require any ASN resources. Contact details can be found at the end of this document.

School Meals

22% of young people at RBA have applied for free school meals. If you think you may be eligible please apply on the East Ayrshire Website via the following link:

<https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/CouncilAndGovernment/Benefits/Benefits-EducationAndSchool/Clothing-grants-and-free-school-meals/Clothing-grants-and-free-school-meals.aspx>

All pupils have a Parent Pay account that they use to pay for school meals. Pupils give their name or code at the dining hall. This way there is no distinction between those pupils receiving school meals and those who don't. If you would like support to complete the online application, please contact your child's Principal Teacher of Guidance.

Surplus Food Initiative

We plan to restart our 'Surplus Food Initiative' whereby any food surplus from lunchtime is available for young people to pick up on their way home. Containers will clearly state allergy information and storage instructions. We would encourage your child to speak to his or her Principal Teacher of Guidance if they would like food at the end of the day but would rather collect it privately. This service is available for all pupils and is not dependent on free school meal entitlement.

School Trips

A range of trips are planned each year. The cost of trips for pupils varies according to destination and type of activity. We try to reduce the costs where possible. We would not want any young person unable to attend a trip because of finances. It will be made clear how to seek support from the school when these trips are scheduled and some funded places may be available.

Events

We are always mindful of financial pressures on families when planning informal events such as fundraising or charity days. We recognise that fun events can actually put added pressure on families. We try to keep these to a minimum where possible. Pupils have the option to donate money or food to support the local community if they wish and we do not insist pupils donate anything at all.

Travel

Pupils attending RBA are transported to school via school bus or make their way on foot. School transport is also provided for young people attending supported study if they live over three miles away from the school.

Free bus transport is provided for young people attending college or other partnership venues. All young people will soon be able to access free bus transport using their National Entitlement Card. Parents/carers will receive more information on this in due course.

Home learning

We try to reduce the cost of learning at home through the use of Microsoft Teams and Show My Homework. Young people who do not have access to digital devices are provided with paper copies of resources and homework. Some young people also received a digital device for periods of home learning to ensure they were not disadvantaged in any way when not in school.

Period poverty

There is free access to sanitary products in toilets and in guidance offices. We ask that girls are respectful of this resource and take what they need to ensure there is availability for others. Girls are also encouraged to take enough sanitary items to last them over weekends and school holidays.

Prom

We recognise that for many pupils, Prom is a key part of their school experience. We also appreciate the high costs associated with outfits and preparation for Prom. Next term we hope to begin a project where prom dresses and suits can be donated for future pupils to wear. Please contact your child's Principal Teacher of Guidance for more support relating to Prom.

Food banks

Across East Ayrshire, there are a number of foodbanks to support families. During the Covid pandemic, there has been an 89% rise in families accessing this support. Please contact your child's Principal Teacher of Guidance if you would like further advice and support in accessing food bank provision.

Breakfast Clubs

We hope to re-introduce our breakfast club facility for pupils as soon as Covid restrictions allow.

Christmas

Christmas time can bring families immense financial pressure. At RBA, we are keen to offer support to try and relieve some of this pressure. Principal Teachers of Guidance are very knowledgeable about support available in the local community such as Cash for Kids Appeal, Hillhouse Foundation, food hamper referrals, Christmas Eve boxes and much more. Please get in touch if you would like any further information.

Further support

We teach young people about poverty related issues as part of our Personal and Social Education (PSE) programme and at assemblies. One of our school values is Equity and we firmly believe that all young people should have equal opportunities and are given support to ensure this happens.

All guidance offices have 'Take what you need' trollies which contain resources such as stationery, toiletries, food and sanitary products. These resources are available for any pupil.

We have further funding available for care experienced children (current and previously). Please contact your child's Principal Teacher of Guidance for more information regarding this

Staff member	Contact details
Mr Dempster (PTG)	Andrew.dempster@eastayrshire.org.uk
Mrs Burgoyne (PTG)	Aimee.burgoyne@eastayrshire.org.uk
Miss McCreddie (PTG)	Lauren.mccreadie@eastayrshire.org.uk
Mrs Cavan (PTG)	nicole.mccabe@eastayrshire.org.uk
Miss Naismith (PTG)	Carly.naismith@eastayrshire.org.uk
Miss Jagodowski (PTG)	Claire.jagodowski@eastayrshire.org.uk
Mr Ferguson (PTG)	Robin.ferguson@eastayrshire.org.uk
Mr Tickner (PTG)	Steve.tickner@eastayrshire.org.uk
Miss Smith (PTG)	Carrie.smith@eastayrshire.org.uk
Mr Beattie (PTG)	Dale.beattie@eastayrshire.org.uk
Miss Donnelly (PT Support for Learning)	Suzanne.donnelly@eastayrshire.org.uk