



Abronhill Primary School and Nursery Class

Poverty Proofing/Cost of the School Day Policy: March 2024

We ASPIRE to 'be the best we can be'



Introduction: Rationale

'The effects of child poverty should not be underestimated. Experiencing child poverty can undermine the health, wellbeing and educational attainment of children.'

(Child Poverty Action Group)

In Abronhill Primary School and Nursery Class, we aim to provide all children with experiences and opportunities that enable them to achieve their full potential, have fun and prepare them for life beyond primary school. These opportunities sometimes have a cost attached to them and we believe that no family should ever be in a position where they struggle financially because of the 'Cost of the School Day'. We embed the 'Getting it Right for Every Child' (GIRFEC) principles throughout our practice and we aim to use effective approaches to get it right for every family. According to Scottish Government figures, one in four Scottish children live in poverty so it is important that we strive to remove financial barriers to education and to support families as much as we can within our community.



Aims

The main aims of this policy are to:

- Provide information on how we relieve the pressures families may face due to the Cost of the School Day.
- Ensure that there are no barriers to learning caused by financial issues and that every child has equal access to opportunities at school.
- Demonstrate the approaches taken to minimise poverty stigma.
- Promote the assistance we can provide to families to help them access financial support beyond the school day.
- Demonstrate that the Pupil Equity Fund is used to ensure that no child is excluded due to financial barriers.

How Do We Reduce the 'Cost of the School Day'?

At the beginning and end of each school year we will seek the views of parents/carers, children, staff members and, when appropriate, other agencies regarding our approaches to reducing the Cost of the School Day. This is to ensure that we get it right for every family as needs may change over time.

Abronhill Primary School and Nursery Class prioritises the Cost of the School Day when planning how to use allocated Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) money to ensure that we are able to support children and families throughout the school year. We also access the services of charities, organisations and local businesses to further support families.

We have identified aspects of the school day that have financial implications and the actions that we have taken to reduce costs for families.

Please refer to the 'Reducing the Cost of the School Day' Action Plan for details of our approaches

What Actions Do We Take To Reduce Stigma?

The positive mental health and wellbeing of every individual is important and we want to ensure that everyone is confident and has high self-esteem. Confidence and self-esteem can be adversely impacted by the stigma of not having the same possessions or opportunities as others. There are times when children may not want to attend school or participate in activities as they feel the clothing or possessions they have are not as good as those of their peers.

We aim to minimise any issues stigma may cause and some of our approaches are detailed in the 'Reducing the Cost of the School Day' Action Plan. The following are examples of some of our targeted approaches aimed at reducing stigma:

- Every child receives the same pencil case and stationery for use in school
- Every child receives a gym bag containing the same shorts and tee shirt (gym shoes are provided for P1-3 and provision of footwear for older children can be arranged if required)
- Every child receives a school water bottle
- Every child in primaries 5, 6 and 7 receives a 'care kit' containing shampoo, shower gel, deodorant, sanitary products, toothbrush and toothpaste and these are replenished throughout the year
- We do not have non-uniform days that require children to wear their own clothes to school but instead may have a pyjama day. The school will always provide something for a child to wear if needed.

What is the 'Our Community Cares' Initiative?

In October 2019, Abronhill Primary School established the 'Our Community Cares' initiative to launch the Cost of the School Day focus and to promote further support for families beyond the school day. We are aware that, at times, families within our community may require help or advice linked to financial issues. These issues may also have an impact on a family's health and wellbeing and it is our aim to provide support if we are able to. By working together, our community can get it right for every family.

Details of the measures we have in place linked to the school day are in the 'Reducing the Cost of the School Day' Action Plan. Details are provided below regarding further procedures we have in place to support families beyond the school day:

Supporting Families Beyond the School Day
Working in Partnership <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We aim to work in partnership with our families and we ensure that they know they are able to contact us confidentially if they require any support.• We are continually establishing links with local community groups, charities, organisations and businesses who can support families in need.• We provide parents with contact details for organisations, such as North Lanarkshire Council's Financial Inclusion Team, who may be able to offer support or we will make contact on their behalf.• We support parents in completing application forms, if required.
'Our Community Cares' Week and Focus Events <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We aim to have an 'Our Community Cares' week each year to focus on poverty proofing and reducing the Cost of the School Day. Invited guests from a range of organisations provide workshops and information sessions for staff, children, parents/carers and members of our local community.• We also aim to focus on the supports available to families beyond the school day.• Our first focus week took place during Poverty Awareness Week in October 2019 and provides the template for future events. Examples of activities include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ Individual classes' curriculum focus for the week included money management, cooking healthy meals on a budget, value of buying premium brands versus budget brands, Rights Respecting Schools links, exploring stigma, focus on reduce, reuse, recycle and play based learning opportunities.➢ Representatives from a local foodbank and the clothing/baby bank presented.➢ 'Let's Talk Money' did budgeting workshops using every day family contexts.➢ 'A Menu for Change' explored the crisis people face in trying to feed families with little income and possible solutions.➢ Active Sports did sessions with all classes to encourage greater attendance at Club 365.➢ Coffee Morning with NLC representative from Club 365 gave a presentation to parents/carers and local councillors on the initiative.
Food

- We encourage parents to apply for free school meals and support with this process.
- We promote attendance at the Breakfast Club and school lunches so that children may have nutritious meals at little or no cost.
- Snacks are available in school for children who do not bring one with them.
- Prior to each school holiday, we ask for food donations from parents and local businesses. We make food hampers available to parents the week before the school holidays to ensure that families have supplies and to help tackle holiday hunger.

Clothing

- We ensure that parents are aware of school clothing grants and the application procedures. We support parents to complete these if required.
- At the end/beginning of each season we ask parents to donate pre-loved 'every day' clothing and footwear. We launder and clean items and then make them available to parents. Any items that are not required are stored, e.g. winter clothing donated in March is made available again in September for the new season. We keep a small supply of items from donations, e.g. wellies for outdoor learning.
- At the end of the school year, we ask parents to donate good quality school uniforms and school bags that we launder and clean for their new owners. From August 2021, we will have an established database with details of the items we have.
- We have clothing rails and boxes that parents may select items from but if they would rather be more discrete, we operate an ordering system where a form can be filled in and sent to school in an envelope or parents may email/call the school. Items will then be put into school bags to take home or can be collected at the office.
- If parents require school uniform or every day clothing or footwear that we do not have, we email all parents to request these specific items, e.g. age 7 school trousers, age 10 girls' winter coat.
- We ask parents to donate Christmas jumpers, Christmas party clothes, Hallowe'en costumes and dressing up clothes so that we can make these available when we have celebrations.

Christmas

- We ask for donations from parents, local businesses and charities of food, clothing and toys so that we can provide Christmas hampers for families.
- We ask identified families for details of the types of toys their children would like and, if we have not already received suitable items, we will send emails to ask if anyone has these pre-loved items to donate. If this is unsuccessful, we will try to purchase suitable toys so the children receive gifts they would like.
- As detailed in our Cost of the School Day approaches, we ask for donations of pre-loved Christmas jumpers and Christmas party clothes so that every child has something suitable for Christmas Jumper Day and their class party.
- Our 'No Gifts' policy ensures that families are not burdened with the cost of buying staff members presents and children do not feel stressed about not giving a gift. We provide children with blank cards to write for staff, if they desire. If parents contact the school wishing to provide gifts, we advise that we will not accept these but if they wish to contribute something we ask that they donate an item for our Christmas hampers.

How Do We Communicate With Families?

We aim to ensure that every family is aware of the actions and procedures we have in place to reduce the Cost of the School Day, the supports that are available within education and from other organisations. We communicate information in the following ways:

- 'Our Community Cares' booklet
- 'Cost of the School Day' calendar
- Emails
- School website/blog and Twitter
- Newsletters
- School handbook
- Information events during parents' meetings twice a year
- 'Our Community Cares' Week and linked events
- Parent Council
- Local Community Groups

How Does Our Parent Council Support These Initiatives?

- The Parent Council shares information on behalf of the Parent Forum with the Head Teacher, including views regarding issues that may have financial implications for families. This enables the Head Teacher to reflect on practice and make any necessary changes to provision in the school.
- The Parent Council engages with 'The Cost of the School Day Parent Council Toolkit' to inform their plans for the session and to identify any action points.
- The Parent Council uses their communication platforms to share information about initiatives.
- They aim to provide events for children with minimum costs attached, e.g. school disco, Christmas Fayre.
- They contribute towards the funding of events so that no child misses out.

Conclusion

Fair isn't everyone getting the same thing.

Fair is everyone getting what they need in order to be successful.

EQUALITY



EQUITY



A partnership approach between schools, families, organisations, local and wider communities is essential in tackling poverty and the Cost of the School Day. Abronhill Primary School and Nursery Class's approaches to reducing the Cost of the School Day and the 'Our Community Cares' initiative enables us to work together to ensure that our children have equal and equitable opportunities and that we can get it right for every family.



Abrohill Primary School and Nursery Class

Reducing the Cost of the School Day Action Plan



Cost	Action	Expected Impact
	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A 'Cost of the School Day' calendar is provided to inform families of when there could be costs throughout the year.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Advanced notice of any costs so families can plan or pay in small instalments.
Uniform	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. All children P1-7 receive a gym bag containing shorts, tee shirt and a water bottle. (P1-3 are also provided with gym shoes).2. A rail and boxes of 'pre-loved' school uniforms are available and parents can help themselves. If parents do not want to 'be seen' to take the items they may complete a form in a sealed envelope, call or email and uniforms will be sent home in school bags or will be available to collect at the office.3. We encourage parents to buy generic school uniform items that are cheaper than items with the school badge on them. We will no longer be promoting the badged items for session 2021-22.4. We put families in touch with charities who can support with costs or clothing items, including the school uniform bank.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Children all have an appropriate kit to take part in gym and there is no stigma attached to labels as everyone has the same items.2. Parents can have laundered school uniforms that are as good as new with no cost attached.3. Parents can save money by purchasing cheaper school uniforms from high street stores or supermarkets.4. Parents can access appropriate items at little or no cost.
Every Day Clothes and Footwear	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. We ask parents to donate pre-loved 'every day' clothing and footwear that are in excellent condition. Items include, wellies, coats, hats, scarves, gloves, shoes, boots, and casual clothing.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Children have suitable clothing and footwear at any time of the year without any cost to families.
School Supplies	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. All children P1-7 receive the same pencil cases with appropriate stationery for use in school.2. We will request that families donate pre-loved school bags that are in excellent condition at the end of the school day and these will be made available to families.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. All children have the stationery they need for the school day and there is no stigma attached to fancy brands.2. Children can have a school bag with no cost attached.
Snacks and Drinks	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Snack items are available in school for any child who does not have one.2. Every child is presented with the same school water bottle.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. All children will have a snack for break time.

		<p>2. All children have the same water bottle so there is no stigma linked to branding. Every child can access water throughout the school day.</p>
Health and Wellbeing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 'Care Kits' for all primary 5, 6 and 7 children are sent home (shower gel, shampoo, deodorant, toothbrush and toothpaste, sanitary products). These are replenished throughout the session. 2. Sanitary products are available for use in school and may also be taken home, if required. 3. 'Our Community Cares' focus events- specific focus on financial issues involving all stakeholders, the local community and visiting specialists 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All children have access to appropriate self-care items as part of their health and wellbeing programme and there is no stigma attached to who receives these. 2. Health and wellbeing needs of individuals are met and there should be no attendance issues due to accessing sanitary products. 3. Our community can work together on providing appropriate support and advice for those who require it.
Curriculum	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is a curriculum focus in all classes on issues linked to finances and the Cost of the School Day, including money management, cooking healthy meals on a budget, value of buying premium brands, Rights Respecting Schools links, exploring stigma, focus on reduce, reuse, recycle, and play based learning. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children can demonstrate further understanding of their rights and of how the school day can be difficult for some due to financial restraints.
Home Learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A new Home Learning policy and activity grids were produced in January 2020 with a range of tasks that have no costs. 2. Home Learning kits and materials are provided for all children to use at home. 3. We regularly check if families have appropriate ICT devices and connectivity, and arrange for devices to be provided when possible. 4. After school Home Learning clubs will be operational when possible. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.& 2. Families can engage in activities with the appropriate resources to support them at no cost. Children can share their home learning in class without concerns about the stigma of not having items that are costly. 3. Families can have access to devices and connectivity to enable them to engage in digital learning at home. 4. Children can work on completing tasks in school that they may not be able to engage in at home.

After School/ Lunch Clubs	1. We prioritise places in after school and lunch clubs for children who do not attend any when out of school.	1. Children all benefit from having the opportunity to attend a club.
Gifts	1. We have a 'No Gift' policy. We make it clear that we will not accept gifts and we provide blank cards for children to write for staff if they would like to.	1. There is no financial burden on families, especially at Christmas time. There is no stress or stigma for children who would not have a gift to give.
Birthday Celebrations	1. We ask that parents do not send birthday cakes into school but will have a monthly celebration in each class for children who have had a birthday (children with holiday birthdays will be included in the monthly celebration nearest to their special day).	1. There will be no stress or stigma for children who may not have a cake. Children will all be celebrated in school.
Other Special Events	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We do not have non-uniform days where children come to school in 'every day' clothes. Instead, we have a pyjama day or a focus day, e.g. World Book Day, odd socks day etc. We ask parents to contact us before the event if they require any support and we will provide items. 2. Parents are asked to donate pre-loved Hallowe'en costumes, Christmas jumpers, Christmas party clothes and dressing up clothes. 3. Parent Council continue to charge £1 for entry to the discos, including a goodie bag with sweets and a drink. 4. PEF and Parent Council contributions enable the whole school to attend the cinema wearing Christmas jumpers and enjoying snacks. 5. Parent Council minimised costs of items at Christmas Fayre. 6. Parents are asked for approximately £20 a year- £10 maximum for summer trip, £3 show ticket, £3 class cooking block, 2x£1 for 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is no stigma regarding clothing and the school will provide children with a suitable item, if required, for the day. Attendance should not be affected by children trying to avoid these days. 2. Items are available for children so that everyone has the same opportunity to dress up for events with no stigma attached to the type of clothing. Attendance at school on these days will not be affected due to children avoiding coming because of clothing. 3. All children are able to attend the discos. 4. All children enjoy a fun experience with their friends with no cost for families. 5. Children are all able to buy an item. 6. Events are affordable due to minimising the contributions and no family misses out due to costs.

	two discos, 2x£1 for two events, e.g. Pyjama Day. If families are unable to afford any of these costs, we provide support.	
Trips	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. iPay is open for parents from the beginning of each session to enable them to pay small amounts throughout the year. 2. PEF is used to pay for a wide range of trips throughout the year and we only ask parents/carers to pay for the summer trip. 3. We limit the cost of the summer school trip to £10 max. per child. 4. We will support any families who require it, including those who have more than one child. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parents can budget and avoid large payments in one go. 2. All children attend trips and have the same experiences as their friends. This also has a positive impact on their attainment as these experiences provide them with contexts to support their learning. 3. Relieves financial pressures and families can budget their payments throughout the year. 4. All children can attend the summer trip without families struggling financially.

APPENDICES and SUPPORT MATERIALS:

Abronhill Primary School and Nursery Class Supports and Materials

- Cost of the School Day/Our Community Cares Folder
- Our Community Cares Champion

NLC and Local Supports and Materials

- Financial Inclusion Team- FIT@northlan.gov.uk Tel: 01698 332551
- NLC Tackling Poverty- <https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-community/tackling-poverty>
- NLC Clothing Grants and Free School Meals- <https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/school-meals/free-school-meals-and-clothing-grants/free-school-meals>
- Scottish Welfare Fund- <https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/benefits-and-money/scottish-welfare-fund>
- School Uniform and Baby Bank- <http://www.cumbernauldkilsythcare.org.uk/>
- Cumbernauld and Kilsyth Citizens Advice Bureau-
<https://www.cas.org.uk/bureaux/cumbernauld-and-kilsyth-citizens-advice-bureau>

Publications and Websites

- Child Poverty Action Group website- <https://cpag.org.uk>
 - Cost of the School Day Toolkit
 - Resources for School Staff
 - Resources for Parents and Carers
 - Resources for Parent Councils
 - Resources for Children
- Education Scotland- <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/practice-exemplars/the-cost-of-the-school-day-programme-child-poverty-action-group>
- Teach First: Poverty Proofing the Classroom- www.teachfirst.org.uk
- The Cost of School, Public Health Scotland video
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LtYUmNnVGzM>
- Tackling Food Insecurity in Scotland - <https://menuforchange.org.uk/>
- Public Health Scotland

<http://www.healthscotland.scot/population-groups/children/child-poverty/local-actions-to-reduce-child-poverty/child-poverty-in-schools/cost-of-school>

- School Costs video- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-qAKiu9nneo>
- www.endchildpoverty.org.uk
- www.povertyprofing.co.uk
- www.challen gepoverty.net
- www.povertyalliance.org
- www.eis.org.uk/Child-Poverty/PovertyBooklet
- <https://elearning.healthscotland.com/>
- <https://www.childrensparliament.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Child-Poverty-CP-Report-2018.pdf>
- <https://youngscot.net/search?q=poverty>
- <https://www.togetherscotland.org.uk/>