



Girvan Primary School

Cost of the School Day Policy

Introduction: Rationale

At Girvan Primary School we aim to provide children with experiences and opportunities 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 the 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 ensure we 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 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.

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. At Girvan Primary we encourage the wearing of uniform on non-PE days. At the end of session 21/22 parents were consulted about the continuation of sports wear on non-PE days. Parents overwhelmingly opted for this to continue.

All children can access material for use within the class eg pencils, rubbers, pens. There is no requirement for these to be supplied from home.

We have a bank of pre-loved uniform and a request system in place. This ensures that uniform is recycled amongst our families.

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

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. These initial views will shape our way forward. In our first consultation feedback has identified the following

- Generally there are very few hidden costs

- The school has already implemented a number of strategies to reduce costs
- School shoes should be removed from uniform with black trainers advised. This would reduce financial implications
- Dolphin House funding – explore how we support more families with the cost of the P7 residential experience.

We will address both of these action points this session.

We will use the ‘reducing the cost of the school day calendar’ to map out where potential costs are and minimise the impact of these for our families. You will have noticed already that we have limited the number of times we approach our families for donations to school events or to charities. We now look carefully at events we support as we recognise the pressure this puts on families. Together with our Parent Council we are now operating a pre-loved uniform shop. During parent evening, coffee mornings and school events, families can access our stock. Families are also able to email the school if they require items. Items will then be placed in a sealed gift bag to go home.

We monitor our school information on free school meal and clothing grant entitlement and contact families early in each session who are no longer accessing support but had previously received this to check the application is in process. This helps to ensure quick access to free school meals for P6 and P7 and clothing grant across the school.

Stepping Stones for Families Money advice service offers monthly drop in sessions for our families.

We look forward to working with our school community and partners to continue to reflect on hidden costs of the school day.

‘Our Community Cares’ Initiative?

Prior to the pandemic the Primary School worked closely with partners across South Carrick to support our school community. Meetings with representatives from Ayrshire College resulted in families accessing support to attend accredited courses such as Early Childcare. Z1, Thriving Communities and Glendoune supported groups of learners including our P6 cohort who took part in a neighbourhood project to develop the local environment.

Our work with Stepping Stones for Families allowed us to sign post families to the service.

Through the group, the approach to the organisation of holiday events for our young people became more streamlined and coordinated with key staff liaising about dates and activities.

This group has re-established and, together with our partners, we have an action plan to support our school community. This includes supporting mental health, financial support and supporting access to key services such as Children 1st, when families need it. We are excited about this work and will consult with parents to ensure we work with the services which support our community best.

Pupil Equity Funding

All schools in Scotland have benefited from funding from the Scottish Government’s Pupil Equity Fund for the last few years. This fund is targeted to those pupils who may face barriers or challenges in accessing education due to financial difficulties. For us, this support is targeted beyond those children who are eligible for free school meals and we take pride in knowing our community well.

Our pupil equity funding aims to narrow the attainment gap for our children. We carefully plan support for key areas of literacy and numeracy and health. In class, children who are identified will work on key interventions designed to ‘close the gap’. We monitor progress carefully. This session we continue our focus on health and firmly believe this is a crucial and integral part of our

curriculum. Alongside Barnardos we are implementing a social and emotional health resource (PATHS) across the school. This was implemented as a response to needs post- pandemic. We also recognise the importance of physical health to our children and are determined to encourage and support children to be more active. Our active schools assistant works with targeted groups and individuals across the school. Uptake of lunch and after school clubs is high.

During this session we are committed to consult further with our community to ensure we continue to meet the needs of our families and avoid hidden costs.