



Carnwath Primary School and Nursery Class, South Lanarkshire Council

Cost of the School Day

The purpose of a school policy is to ensure that all stakeholders have a shared understanding of the aims and how these aims are delivered in practice. This policy concerns the **Cost of the School Day** and includes the context, how we consult with our school stakeholders and how we will support families throughout the school year.

“At the heart of Cost of the School Day is the involvement of children, parents and staff in identifying which ‘school things’ result in additional financial burden for families and risk children and young people experiencing stigma or feeling excluded. All children and young people can play a part in helping to make their school more inclusive and the best solutions will come from them as experts in their own school experience. Some solutions will come directly from children and families who have first-hand experience of living in poverty, so be encouraged to work with the expertise that comes with experience.”
(CPAG 2021)

In every school in Scotland, more and more parents, carers and families are struggling on low incomes meaning that many of our children are locked out of opportunities to participate, learn and thrive. Given the seismic changes brought about by Covid-19, this situation is even more critical than before. We can, and must, support all of our children to take full and equal advantage of opportunities in school and consider how to reduce the extra costs for parents and carers. (CPAG 2021)

Lots of families in Scotland are living on low incomes – over a quarter of children in Scotland come from families which sometimes struggle to make ends meet. We want to make sure that lack of money doesn't stand in the way of anyone taking part at school. We also want to make sure that nobody feels left out or bad at school because of lack of money. (CPAG 2021)

Families can move in and out of poverty-there are short term, recurrent and persistent states of poverty depending on individual and family circumstances. Findings of a recent 'Growing Up in Scotland' survey have revealed that over the last 7 years only 45% of children in Scotland **HAVE NOT** experienced at least one year of growing up in poverty. Many of the ways to tackle poverty are societal, not just related to school, but is clear we have our own part to play in working to alleviate some of the issues faced by pupils and parents who are confronted with the often daily dilemmas of providing support for their child's school experience.

At Carnwath Primary School and Nursery Class we recognise the need to reduce the Cost of the School Day for all our pupils and particularly if pupils are experiencing poverty. At the time of writing, 49% of our children are living in SIMD 1 or 2 and/or are in receipt of free school meals.

The Carnwath Primary and Nursery policy will:

- ensure equal access to opportunities at school and remove barriers to participation and learning for children and young people from low-income households
- minimise income stigma and exclusion amongst children and young people
- reduce the pressures which school costs place on family incomes
- support families to access financial entitlements and maximise their incomes
- ensure that Pupil Equity Funding is effectively used to remove the financial barriers which stand in the way of children and young people's participation and learning

Process

- Every 2 years we will engage all stakeholders in a consultation to ensure everyone has had the opportunity to have their opinions heard. From this an action plan will be written and delivered with support from all stakeholders.
- Each year all stakeholders will be engaged in the Participatory Budgeting process to decide on the priorities for the Pupil Equity Fund spend.
- Each term the school newsletter will report on the COSD action plan
- The school will work closely with the Parent Council to identify how we can work together to minimise the impact of poverty on the experiences our children have
- The Pre-loved initiative will continue throughout the year where parents can donate / collect items of school uniform / Christmas clothes / Halloween outfits
- The Sharing Shed will continue to be stocked with basic food and household items which can be accessed during the school day. Parents and carers are welcome to donate what they can and take what they need as they see fit.
- The Snack Station will continue to run – ensuring all children have a snack every day at break time.

Our Values

The school values underpin all the policies that we have. The values of Safe, Happy, Respect and Friendship are particularly pertinent to the COSD policy.

Safe: We will provide a safe environment where pupils and parents/carers feel confident they can discuss worries with us without judgement. Our main priority is to provide support.

Happy: We will ensure children feel included in all activities and experiences we provide. No child will feel excluded because of a financial barrier.

Respect: We will respect all our families and ensure confidentiality where required. We will not make judgements based on financial knowledge.

Friendship: We will work to create and maintain an ethos where everyone in our school community feels included and important.

This will be evidenced by

- school staff making no assumptions about families financial situations
- Ensuring an affordable school year
- Fundraising activities which do not always ask families to contribute
- Modifying expectations and learning tasks to ensure no financial pressures on families
- Offering/ providing support to access IT
- Having consistent expectations and practice between staff members on uniform/resources
- Rewards and merits unaffected by issues relating to finances at home
- Anti-bullying alert for all staff to income-based bullying or stigma
- Greater poverty awareness among children
- Making sure families get financial entitlements- clothing grants, free meals
- Staff discretion and empathy
- Ensuring costs for trips are affordable. This includes attendance at sporting events.
- Covering costs/ subsidising and supporting discounts where possible
- Applying for grants to cover costs of trips / resources
- Systems in place where pupils/ parents/ carers do not feel embarrassed asking for help/ subsidy
- Regular information in the school newsletter signposting supports
-

At Carnwath Primary School and Nursery Class we recognise the need to reduce the Cost of the School Day for all our pupils and particularly for our pupils who are already experiencing poverty. We examine the School Day through the following headings; Uniform, Travel, Learning, Friendship, School trips, Eating, Fun, Clubs and Home learning.

Uniform

Carnwath Primary School uniform is:

black sweatshirts



yellow polo shirts



grey or black trousers/skirts



Families can purchase uniforms from ALJ Industrial, 18 Bloomgate, Lanark, Tel: 01555 665715 and online at <https://www.aljonline.co.uk/> .

We do not insist on badged sweatshirts/poloshirts and items and similar items from other shops without the logo are absolutely fine so please don't feel pressured into paying for the more expensive version.

We also have an established 'pre-loved' collection which includes school and nursery uniform, and parents are welcome to visit at any time during the school year and select any items they need. This is a great way to recycle perfectly good uniforms when your children grow out of clothes so quickly.

Travel

The majority of our children travel to school on foot. Transport is provided by the Local Authority for children within the catchment who live one mile or more from the school. We are aware that this could mean some children are not able to attend after school clubs and we therefore ensure that we have lunch time activities as well as after school. We are also keen to make alternative arrangements should any child who is entitled to school transport wish to attend an after-school activity so please contact us if this is the case.

Learning

Children at Carnwath Primary School do not need to pay for any core learning activity. Pens and pencils are provided and young people do not need to bring their own equipment. Our homework position statement encourages children to read at home every day and children are always welcome to borrow books from the school library for this purpose. Where a school trip is planned to enhance learning, we ask for a contribution towards cost, but this is not mandatory, and all children will be able to participate in educational outings (see below)

Friendships

We ensure that any pupil experiencing poverty-related bullying has a way of reporting this in confidence. There is a robust anti-bully policy within the school which is based on the South Lanarkshire Policy 'Treat Me Well', and the issue is regularly discussed with children. Along with the parent council, we intend to gather

the views of our young people and families on the Cost of the School Day and involve them in decision making around this. We will regularly revisit our practice and evaluate it, ensuring we are doing as much as we can to support parents and children.

School Trips

Currently our trips are planned each year by class teachers and are linked to an educational topic being covered in class. We aim to keep the cost of these as low as possible. We try to reduce the cost by ensuring we apply for any grants that are available and by inviting visitors into the school instead of us going to visit them. The Parent Council are very supportive with this area and frequently contribute to trips. We may ask for a contribution towards cost but this is not mandatory and all children will be able to participate in educational outings. There will be the opportunity to pay for all trips via a staged payment plan.

For residential experiences we give maximum advance notice and put a staged payment plan in place. Families who need support are encouraged to speak to the school.

No child will ever miss out on a school trip due to financial restraints. As mentioned before, any parent who feels the cost of a trip is a barrier to their child participating, should contact the school to discuss.

Travel for swimming in P6 is an additional cost. We have used the school fund and PEF to contribute towards costs and always aim to keep this as low as possible.

Eating at school

Last school year we had 23% of pupils who were in receipt of Free School Meals. We are aware that there may be a stigma associated with a free lunch however, due to the process we use for ordering lunches, children are unaware of who receives these and who does not. We estimate that approximately 95% of pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals take up their entitlement. In order to increase that percentage we intend to offer support for applications throughout the year.

Fun Events

Carnwath Primary School and Nursery Class recognise that events planned for enjoyment can actually put added pressure on to families. We currently look carefully at attendance and participation in these events in order to see if there are any poverty-related patterns that require action. As with school trips, our Fun Events are planned carefully in an annual calendar to ensure there is no period of time where several events run at once. We ensure activities are made available to all children regardless of whether or not they can afford it. We currently fund raise by organising dress down days however these are limited to one per year. The Parent

Council organise one sponsored event per year but again, we understand that not all families are able to contribute so they are also proactive when seeking other ways to raise funds such as applying for grants, bag packing events and establishing links with local businesses and supermarkets.

There is no expectation that staff should be given gifts at Christmas or at the end of the school year. A Christmas treat will be provided for all children, but no small gifts will be given out.

School Clubs

At Carnwath Primary School and Nursery Class we have a variety of clubs running throughout the year. There is no charge per young person to take part. Any equipment or resources required for these clubs is provided by the school.

Home Learning

We try to reduce the cost of learning at home as much as possible by limiting tasks children are required to do at home and ensuring children have access to Google Classroom. Homework is not linked to our Behaviour Policy.

Parent/ Carer role

We ask that parents/carers support the Cost of the School Day by:

- Asking us if support is required – we guarantee confidentiality and will access support to ensure all pupils have equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life. There is always information regarding financial supports in the monthly newsletter
- Using our ‘Pre-Loved’ clothing system by either donating or collecting items
- Using our Sharing Shed by donating or taking some items on a regular basis. This helps us keep it stocked with fresh food.
- Letting us know if events are going to cause additional stress at home – we can support families

Summary

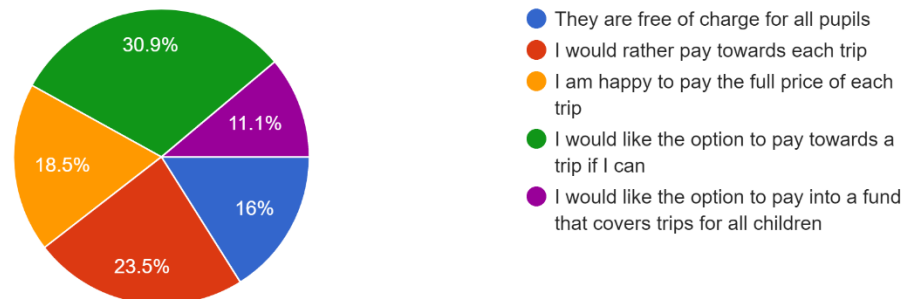
We are very clear that the Cost of the School Day is an area that requires constant vigilance and will not be ‘fixed’ by any one action. In our Improvement Plan we will continue to consider the impact of this in everything we do.

If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact the Head Teacher, Mrs Jennifer Bradford who will be happy to discuss these with you.

Appendix 1 – Results from Consultation with Parents

How would you prefer we managed the cost of trips?

81 responses



The full consultation received 17 responses. Parents asked that anti-bullying and sports be covered in the policy. These are included.

94% of respondents said they were aware of our pre-loved provision and 74.5% agreed they made use of it.

All were aware of our sharing shed and 58.8% said they had either donated or taken something from it.

Less than half who responded realised there was a snack station available for any child who had forgotten their snack. We will ensure this is shared more frequently.

No other suggestions were made for the policy although one parent suggested we have more fund-raising events. We will consider this whilst ensuring there is no point in the school year where we are asking for money for too many events.