**Cost of the School Day Position Statement**

**Neilsland Primary School, South Lanarkshire Council**

At Neilsland Primary School 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**

Our current uniform is

* Navy blue/black sweatshirt, sweater or cardigan,
* White polo shirt or shirt and tie,
* Navy blue/grey/black skirt, pinafore or trousers,
* Jacket or blazer,
* Soft shoes for indoor wear throughout day.

Families can purchase uniforms from Scotcrest, 41 Quarry Street, Hamilton. We do not insist on badged sweatshirts/poloshirts, therefore, parents are able to choose their preferred and most affordable uniform supplier, including local supermarkets. We also have a wide range of ‘as good as new’ uniforms available on our recycle rail.

**Travel**

The majority of our children walk to school. Almost all of our children are able to attend after school clubs and for those who are not within walking distance of the school, we ensure that we have lunch time activities as well as after school activities.

**Learning**

Children at Neilsland 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. We currently have an informal procedure for young people to borrow equipment if they need it for homework (e.g craft equipment). Homework support is also provided on a daily basis in school and is on offer to all children. For children who do not have access at home to ICT equipment to help them complete homework, we make other arrangements for them to use ICT in school and complete their tasks.

**Friendships**

We ensure that any pupil experiencing poverty-related bullying has a way of reporting this in confidence. We teach young people about poverty related issues as part of our Health and Wellbeing programme and during assemblies. We have discussed the Cost of the School Day with the Parent Council and intend to extend this consultation further to take into account the views of our young people and families and involve them in decision making around this.

School Trips

Currently our trips are planned each year by class teachers to consolidate interdisciplinary work within the class. The average cost of trips for pupils is £5.00. We reduce the cost by subsidising each trip by the cost of the buses. In addition, we participate in a wide range of sporting activities promoted by South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture and our Active Schools Coordinator. We also attend competitions and events in our Learning Community and SLC. We have an informal policy for families with more than one child. Families with three children only pay for two children and families with more than three children, pay a percentage of each trip for each child. We try to reduce the cost by fundraising. We do not charge our P7 pupils for any transition visits to secondary school. We work closely with our families to ensure that poverty is not a barrier to pupils’ participation in residential excursions. We make every effort to ensure that all excursions are accessible for all children and take into account the needs of individual family circumstances.

**Eating at school**

Last school year we had 31% of pupils who were in receipt of Free School Meals. The introduction of ParentPay has helped to reduce any stigma that may be associated with receiving a free lunch. We estimate that the majority of our P4-7 pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals take up their entitlement, however, there are some P1-3 pupils whose parents have not claimed this entitlement due to meals for these children being free for everyone. Moving forward, we will continue to build on our positive relationships with our families to ensure that all those who should receive a Free School Meal take up their entitlement. We also intend to raise awareness of free meal entitlement through the Parent Council and our Q&A sessions.

**Fun Events**

Neilsland Primary School recognise that events planned for enjoyment can actually put added pressure on to families. We intend to look carefully at attendance and participation in these events in order to see if there are any poverty-related patterns that require action. Our Fun Events are planned at the start of the session to ensure that they are evenly spaced out over the year. When young people cannot afford to take part in any activity we ensure they can still experience it. We currently fund raise by holding Christmas/Summer fayres and sponsored events within school. We understand that not all families are able to contribute so ensure that there are always a variety of zero costed activities at fayres and that all children take part in the sponsored activities.

**School Clubs**

At Neilsland Primary School we have a range of clubs including; netball, library, fun fitness, Taekwondo, Judo, chess, cooking, yoga, football, BSL and dance. We normally charge £1 per young person to take part in any session where we are using a visiting coach. The majority of our extra curricular clubs have no cost. We currently do not insist on any specialist kit for any of our extra-curricular activities. To ensure that poverty is not a barrier to pupils’ participation, the cost is reduced or waived for our most vulnerable families. No child would be refused the opportunity to participate, due to lack of payment.

**Home Learning**

We try to reduce the cost of learning at home as much as possible by lending equipment, providing craft materials etc when required and by offering daily homework support to all children to allow tasks to be completed using resources available within school. For children who do not have access at home to ICT equipment to help them complete homework, we make other arrangements for them to use ICT in school and complete their tasks. We do not have a specific policy in the school about lending equipment for pupils who may struggle but we ensure that any homework activity can be completed by *all* pupils no matter their family circumstances. Should any pupils with a specific learning difficulty or other additional support need require specialist resources this will be provided. Homework is not linked to our Behaviour Policy. We encourage all children to complete homework tasks and strategies are in place to facilitate this, however, we fully appreciate that individual circumstances need to be taken into account.

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 for 2019/20 we will be focusing on enhancing our approaches to ensure barriers to participation and engagement in the wider life of the school are reduced for all pupils and:

* Continue to ensure pupils do not pay for any core learning activities or resources.
* Raise awareness of free school meal entitlement through the Parent Council Q&A sessions.
* Build on our positive relationships with our families to ensure that all those who should receive a Free School Meal take up their entitlement.
* Continue to subsidise school trips, sporting activities, residential excursions and other out of school events.
* Reduce the cost of school trips by looking for more opportunities within the local area
* Gather the views of our pupils and families on the Cost of the School Day and involve them in decision making.
* Investigate funding opportunities to support the cost of extra-curricular clubs.
* Highlight the benefits of ParentPay as a way of saving money on a regular basis
* Work in partnership with our Parent Council to identify ways in which families who are struggling may be supported.

This statement will be replaced by June 2020 with a School Policy on Cost of the School Day.