



Cost of the School Day Policy

Stonehouse Primary School, South Lanarkshire Council



Rationale for Addressing the Cost of the School Day at Stonehouse Primary School

Cost of the School Day is crucial for ensuring that all children, regardless of their socio-economic background, have access to an equitable education. The Scottish Government, Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG), Growing Up in Scotland (GUS) survey, and the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) provide a strong rationale for schools to actively reduce barriers caused by poverty.

Child Poverty in Scotland

Scotland faces significant child poverty challenges, with nearly one in four children living in poverty according to the Scottish Government's most recent data. The Scottish Government is committed to reducing child poverty and has set statutory targets to eradicate it by 2030 under the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017. Key to this commitment is minimizing the financial pressures associated with schooling, which can place additional stress on low-income families.

Impact of School-Related Costs

According to research by the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG), the costs associated with attending school—such as uniforms, meals, transport, school trips, and extracurricular activities—can be significant for low-income families. These costs may limit children's participation in school life, which can affect their educational attainment and overall well-being. In its 2019 "Cost of the School Day" report, CPAG emphasizes that addressing these barriers is essential for tackling the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers.

Growing Up in Scotland (GUS) Survey Findings

The Growing Up in Scotland (GUS) survey provides valuable longitudinal data on the experiences of children and families across the country. Findings from the survey indicate that children from lower-income households are less likely to participate in enriching school experiences, such as extracurricular activities or school trips, due to financial barriers. These missed opportunities can negatively affect both academic and social outcomes, contributing to inequality in the classroom. Schools can play a vital role in mitigating these inequalities by reducing or eliminating costs associated with everyday school life.

Pupil Equity Fund (PEF)

The Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) is a key financial resource provided by the Scottish Government to tackle the attainment gap in schools. It allocates additional funding directly to schools based on the number of pupils eligible for free school meals, targeting resources to areas of greatest need. The PEF empowers schools to implement tailored interventions that support children from low-income families. By utilising PEF, schools can subsidise or eliminate costs associated with trips, materials, and extracurricular activities, thus ensuring that financial barriers do not impact pupils' ability to participate fully in school life.

Addressing the Attainment Gap

One of the Scottish Government's key education priorities is closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged pupils. The Scottish Attainment Challenge, supported by PEF, specifically aims to improve outcomes for children in poverty. Reducing the cost of the school day is critical to this effort, as financial barriers can affect a child's ability to engage with their education, leading to lower attainment levels. Addressing these costs helps create a more level playing field where all children can thrive regardless of their economic background.

Current Practice to address Cost of the School Day at Stonehouse Primary School

Presently, we use 5% of our annual PEF allocation for planned spends which arise through participatory budgeting. This includes our pupils, parents and staff all voting on how best to spend this money.

At Stonehouse Primary School (South Lanarkshire Council) we are committed to reducing the Cost of the School Day for all pupils, particularly those experiencing poverty. At present, 35% of learners are either in receipt of Free School Meals and/or live in SIMD 1 or 2.

Advice on financial support is shared via Parents Portal and Money Matters information is available in our reception area. If we feel a family could benefit from financial support a member of SLT discusses this with them, offering foodbank vouchers and how to access information.

Parent Council discussions on Cost of the School Day take place and they help to shape our policy on this.

We regularly assess the Cost of the School Day across various areas including: Uniform, Travel, Learning, Friendships, School Trips, Meals, Fun Events, Clubs, and Home Learning to ensure equality and affordability for every student. Our practice is outlined below.

Uniform

- The school uniform consists of dark trousers, sky blue polo shirt or shirt, and a maroon jumper.
- Families can purchase uniforms from selected retailers, but we do not require badged or embroidered items.
- Pre-loved uniforms are made available through our free uniform shop. This includes regular clothing and seasonal items such as winter jackets and costumes.
- Children who join our school throughout the year are offered uniform.
- We do not ask for changes of shoes for indoor use

Travel and Transport

- Most pupils walk to school, with transport provided by the Local Authority for eligible children.
- To ensure equal participation in afterschool activities, lunchtime clubs are available, and transport assistance may be provided from the school's budget if needed.

Learning Materials

- All core learning materials such as pencils, crayons, jotters, and homework diaries are supplied by the school free of charge.
- No child is required to pay for basic learning materials, ensuring that poverty does not hinder academic progress.

Relationships and Friendships

- We provide confidential support to pupils experiencing poverty-related social issues.
- Through our curriculum, we educate pupils about poverty and related issues, emphasising inclusion and understanding.
- Food bags and vouchers for local food banks are made available to families in need. Regular discussions with parents and the PTA ensure ongoing collaboration and support.

School Excursions

- Parents are notified in advance of trip costs and can use ParentPay for payments. Families struggling to pay are encouraged to contact the school for support.
- Pupil Equity Funding is used to pay for class excursions.
- We do not visit any gift shops or require additional money on any trip.
- Children are given the option of ordering a school packed lunch.
- The Parent Council/ PTA supports the Primary 7 leaver's trip through a donation. The remaining amount (no more than £20) does incur a cost for families however there are opportunities for families to discuss the trip with SLT and we never exclude anyone who has not paid. The use of ParentPay for paying the trip is set up in advance to allow the trip to be paid up in smaller amounts.

Eating at School

- Free school lunches are provided to all pupils in Primary 1-5.
- Approximately 23% of our pupils receive means-tested free meals. We ensure that ParentPay removes stigma associated with free lunches.
- A free breakfast club operates every Monday to Friday from 8:15 AM to 8:45 AM.
- Any child without a snack is offered fruit from the school kitchen.

Period Poverty

- Sanitary products are freely available to all pupils to address period poverty. Products are distributed to senior girls during relevant lessons, and additional supplies are available upon request.

Fun Events, Fundraising and Charity

- Fun events, such as World Book Day, do not require pupils to dress up, minimising costs for families.
- Seasonal pre-loved shops provide free costumes and other items to reduce financial strain on families.

- School discos, organised by the PTA, ask for a voluntary donation but ensure no child is excluded for financial reasons.
- We do not participate in regular Dress Down Days.
- We have one school fundraising event a year. All children participate regardless of any monetary contribution.
- We collect non-perishable items for the local church foodbank at various times throughout the year, this is voluntary.
- We participate in charity events, organised by classes as part of Enterprise Education. Not all events ask for money or donations. We teach about the work of the charities.
- Parent Pay is used to collect any donations, therefore removing any stigma of not having cash.

School Clubs

- Afterschool clubs, including Football, Netball, and Cross Country, are offered at no cost to pupils. Active Schools provide multi-sports activities for younger students.
- Some lunch-time clubs are offered by Active Schools.
- All required equipment and kits for tournaments are supplied by the school, ensuring full participation without additional costs.

Home Learning Support

- Homework materials, including jotters, reading books, and stationery, are provided to pupils who need them.
- We regularly survey families to identify any barriers to accessing IT devices or internet connections and take action to support home learning when necessary.
- Homework tasks are designed to ensure all pupils can complete them, regardless of their financial circumstances.

Ongoing Monitoring and Adaptation

- Stonehouse Primary School recognises that addressing the Cost of the School Day is an ongoing process requiring continuous attention. We regularly review and adapt our policies in consultation with pupils, parents, and staff to meet the evolving needs of our community.

This policy reflects our commitment to reducing financial barriers and ensuring equal opportunities for all students.

Cost of the School Day – Annual Planner

Week Beginning	Aug	Aug	Aug	SEP	Sept	Sep	Sept	Oct	Oct		Oc	Oct	Nov	Nov	Nov	Nov	Dec	Dec	Dec	Dec	Ja	Jan	Jan	Jan
Mon	Inset												Poppies					Hamper donat-ions						
Tue	Inset											H'ween Parties						Xmas concert	Xmas Party					
Wed	Pupils return								School Photos									Xmas Concert	Xmas Party					
Thur									School Photos											Xmas Party				
Fri									Food Bank Donation (Harvest)						Toy Sale									

Week Beginning	Jan	Feb	Feb	Feb	Feb	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	May	May	May	May	Jun	Jun	Jun	Jun	Jun 30
Mon																						P7 Leavers' Trip	
Tue																							
Wed																				Summer Disco			
Thur																							
Fri							Red Nose Day																



School Fund



Charity



PTA



Other costs