

# Tinto P.S & N.C



## Cost of the School Day Policy

March 2023

## 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** (COSD) 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.” (Child Poverty Action Group 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 it 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 Tinto P.S & N.C 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 (March 2023) Tinto P.S is in the fortunate position of having only 13:98 pupils receiving Free School Meals (FSM) and all the pupils living in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) areas 5-8 deciles (1-3 are high areas of deprivation). We have a 2-3 nursery class with a very small number of 2-3 children accessing this nursery provision due to being in receipt of benefits.

### The Tinto P.S & N.C 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 the CPAG surveys 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 month the school newsletter will report on the COSD action plan
- Fund raising by the Parent Council will support payment towards transport for school trips and additional resources to support learning activities, after school clubs
- The "Recycle/Reuse" initiative will continue throughout the year where parents can donate / collect items of school uniform / Christmas clothes / Halloween outfits

### **Our school role**

The school values underpin all the policies that we have. The values of Respect, Equality, Trust and Caring are particularly pertinent to the COSD policy.

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

Equality: We will ensure all families are given equal opportunities to participate in all school activities whether these are part of the learning programme or after school activities.

Trust: We will work hard to gain the trust of our families so that they can ask for support, knowing this will be confidential and without judgement.

Caring: We will demonstrate a caring ethos to all stakeholders, making everyone feel valued and welcome to the school community.

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
- 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

### Learning

Children at Tinto P.S & N.C 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. This is clearly stated in the School Handbook and the P1 Starting School booklet, plus the information is given in the “Starting School” parent meeting in June. 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).

### Home Learning

Although most home learning tasks have little or no costs, there are exceptions that can create difficulties for children from low income households e.g. craft projects and homework that requires computers, online access. We will not ask for printers to be used as part of homework. We would encourage parents/ carers to speak to the school if they have any specific concerns to allow us to identify areas to support pupil engagement.

### Friendships

We ensure that should any pupil experiencing poverty-related bullying has a way of reporting this in confidence. The “Better Relationships, Better Behaviour” and Anti Bullying statement were written in consultation with pupils and parents so all have a shared understanding of the school values, responsibilities and expectations. We do teach P1-7 about poverty related issues as part of Health & Well Being when learning about how to recognise and stand up to bullying, during assemblies and in financial education. In the nursery, the focus is on being kind and respectful and how to co-operate with each other and share. We have gathered the views of our young people through the Pupil Council and families via the Parent Council and our ongoing consultation processes on the Cost of the School Day and involved them in decision making around this.

Healthy eating: Lack of food/poor nutrition are realities for some children. Food costs can be significant and receiving Free School Meals can help. All P1-5 pupils have access to free school meals. Information is available on the school and South Lanarkshire Council websites informing parents about entitlement to Free School Meals and how to apply. We also offer a free Breakfast Club where

the children can have toast / wheatabix and a drink. The children can also access fresh fruit at break times. We also can link families to the local foodbank.

We are aware that there may be a stigma associated with a free lunch and we prevent this by ensuring that this is not made public knowledge to peers. We estimate that approximately all pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals take up their entitlement. When on trips, we will ensure that the packed lunch is in a shop bought lunch bag so that it is not obvious it is a free meal

*The following areas were highlighted in the 2020-21 & 2021-22 surveys as possible points of financial stress. This is how we will support families in these areas:*

#### Clothing and school uniform:

The response from the parent survey was that this was the most expensive item (outwith residential) including shoes. Our current uniform is a purple sweatshirt with the school logo, a white polo shirt, grey skirt/trousers. White shirt and tie can be worn if preferred. Families can purchase sweatshirts with the Tinto badge and ties from AJ's in Lanark, however a plain purple sweatshirt or jumper can also be worn. The parent/carer response supported this view of "belonging" and reported that there were no sanctions if uniform was not worn. The children also like the sense of belonging that the uniform promotes and said that it stopped comments about clothes. Some children said they did not participate in dress down days for this reason. Parents also acknowledged that the basic polo shirt and grey trousers can be bought cheaply from a range of stores. The Nursery class also have a sweatshirt that can be purchased if parents wish to do so. This is entirely voluntary and there is no expectation that all children should have one.

For P.E we ask that all children have shorts and a t-shirt (no football shirts) and gym shoes. Due to Covid we did not use changing rooms and asked the children to come to school in their P.E kit. This will be continued as it has saved time re changing and parent comments have evidenced that this lessens wear and tear on the school uniform and reduces the amount needed.

Parents on certain benefits can access a clothing grant to help with school uniform costs. SLC grant is currently £130. Information is available on the school and SLC website to inform parents regarding information about entitlement to clothing grants and how to apply.

Please access our "Resuse/ Recycle" uniform store to donate or collect items of clothing. We also have Halloween and Christmas clothing.

#### School trips

The school only arranges events outside of school that we feel will enrich a pupil's school and life experience. We aim to reduce costs by subsidising with school funds, using PEF, applying for grants, fundraising activities or Parent Council support. We may ask for a contribution towards cost but this is not mandatory and all children will be able to participate in educational outings

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, we ask for a contribution towards cost but this is not mandatory and all children will be able to participate in educational outings

We only charge for two children in a family for the day trips and any fund raising events. The majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire understood that contributions were asked for and some were happy to supplement if other families could not afford a contribution.

No child will ever miss out on a school trip due to financial restraints

Travel for swimming in P4/5 is an additional cost. We have applied for grants/ used Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) to contribute towards costs and have also changed the swimming rota to all P4/5 pupils attending every other year rather than just P5 each year.

### Fundraising

Special days, events and activities are a fun part of school life and often raise valuable funds. However, such events can create difficulties for some children due to lack of immediate funds, hidden costs and feeling embarrassed and marginalised. All our fund-raising activities take place during the school day. We plan in advance to ensure they are spread evenly. If the event is a sponsored one, we do not ask for sponsor sheets to be returned to school and all children participate regardless of contributions. All donations come via ParentPay so this removes any embarrassment regarding the handing in of money raised.

Examples of fund raising activities include an annual fund raising event for nursery and primary; Christmas Fayre annually, and in partnership with the parent group, "Tinto Fund Raisers", there are family Bingo and Race nights. The Tinto Fund Raisers also raise money by having stalls at the Village Day. The funds raised have contributed towards transport costs of trips, Halloween & summer school discos and additional equipment for school and nursery.

Instead of money we sometimes put out a request for baking products / jigsaws and toys no longer played with at home/ DVDs no longer watched etc.

Clubs: We offer some after-school clubs, all of which are free. These clubs are a valuable resource for children, making new interests and experiences accessible to them. The clubs are organised by the Parent Council sub group – After School clubs. Information is given via the App and newsletters.

We recognise that, as almost 50% of pupils travel by school bus, after school clubs can add to costs as parents/carers drive to collect their children. Therefore we ensure that we have lunch time activities, organised by the pupils. The participation of pupils is recorded and tracked on the school Achievement Tracker and provision offered for children not involved in any ASC activity.

### **Parent/ Carer role**

To ask 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.

To use the "Reuse/Recycle" clothing system by either donating or collecting items

To let us know if fundraising events are going to cause additional stress at home – we can support families

### **Conclusion**

Our aim is to ensure that every day at school is an enjoyable one for the children. This includes working in partnership with our parents and carers. Part of this partnership working is to provide financial support in terms of advice, subsidising activities where possible and in ensuring all pupils have equal access to all opportunities offered by removing financial barriers.

**Unequal access to learning and opportunities at school means unequal outcomes for our children. It is crucial that every child is able to make the most of their school day. Let's make that happen. (CPAG 2021)**

**March 2023**

This policy will be reviewed in 2026