



## Cost of the School Day Policy

September 2024

Article 28 of the UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) states that, “children and young people have the right to education, no matter who they are: regardless of race, gender or disability or if they’re a refugee. Education should be free and compulsory.”

Curriculum for Excellence develops the whole child and enables them to become confident individuals, successful learners, effective contributors and responsible citizens. To do this, schools need to offer a wide range of experiences and opportunities.

At Woodhead, we recognise that we must enable all of our children to take full and equal advantage of opportunities in school and consider how to reduce the costs for parents and carers. At the heart of Cost of the School Day is the meaningful involvement of key stakeholders (parents, staff and pupils) in planning and identifying possible financial burdens to remove/reduce possible cost barriers. Our Parent Council group are consulted on the *Cost of the School Day* as a standing item on monthly agendas.

This policy is designed to outline action points for reducing costs and highlight the supports we offer in school.

This includes:

- ✓ removing barriers to participation and learning for children and young people from low income households.
- ✓ minimising poverty related stigma.
- ✓ reducing pressures which school costs place on family incomes.
- ✓ supporting families to access entitlements and maximising their incomes.
- ✓ using Pupil Equity Funding and/or Participatory Budgeting to remove financial barriers which stand in the way of children and young people learning.
- ✓ embedding Cost of the School Day in school improvement planning.

We will attempt to minimise the hidden cost of the school day under the following headings:

- *Uniform*
- *School Trips*
- *Extra-curricular clubs*
- *Learning*
- *Learning at Home*
- *Fun Events*
- *Eating*
- *Attitudes towards Poverty*
- *Travelling*
- *Friendships*

## **Uniform**

In order to promote a sense of belonging and pride, all children will be encouraged to wear an affordable school uniform. Through our community larder, we ensure pre-loved items of school uniform are available throughout the year. Families are asked to donate items of uniform, which they themselves can no longer use but are still in wearable condition. This creates for a more sustainable environment as well as allowing pupils access to uniform should they require any items.

In addition, we share the procedures for applying for clothing grants via our newsletters and website. We also promote non-badged, unbranded items as part of our school uniform.

Blazers are considered an optional item and are not compulsory. This message is shared with our parents, particularly around times of transition into primary. Children who join Woodhead mid-year will automatically be offered a pre-loved uniform if available in their size. There is also a small selection of school bags and jackets made available.

Our Nursery children can wear their own clothes or choose to wear the nursery polo-shirt and jumper. As part of our nursery to primary transition events, new families are encouraged to select uniform items from the community larder. We actively encourage the use of the community larder via newsletters to parents/carers and at open days/ showcase events.

Each year our PTA gift school ties to our new pupils starting Primary 1 and Primary 7 pupils moving onto secondary school.

We have also introduced a payment plan option for parents/ carers to use as part of purchasing P7 hoodies (with advance notice given).

Our pupils are encouraged to wear PE clothes all year round on PE days. This year we are planning changes to our playground which will promote play in the outdoors. We will share plans to modify school uniform in advance to minimise impact of families.

We have plans to offer sew on badges to families as an alternative to badged items of uniform, which can then be re-used.

Furthermore, as with all SLC establishments, free female sanitary products are available. These can be located on the ground floor toilet next to the lift.

## **School Trips**

Last year the school community voted to spend the participatory budget on school trips. This ensured that no families were required to pay for outings. The school community will be involved in voting for how to spend the participatory budget in June (2024), where voting for school trips will again, be an option.

(If the school community decide to use the Participatory Budget in an alternative way, the following measures are in place):

- Setting a maximum limit to the cost of school trips organised.
- Organising no more than one educational excursion per class per year that we ask parents to contribute towards the cost.

- Applying for transport subsidies when available to reduce the cost of school trips, e.g. Science Centre/ Historic Scotland.

- Where transport for sporting outings requires a cost, we will ensure this is a 'donation'.

When planning school trips, we ensure these are spread across the session, instead of limiting trips to the final term where bus costs can be increased due to availability. We also aim to inform our parent/ carers of planned trips with as much notice as possible.

When planning school trips, we will continue to consider potential 'hidden' costs such as specialist clothing. No spending money will be required. During trips or outings, school uniform will be worn. All pupils in P1-5 and FSM eligible pupils in P6-7 are entitled to a school packed lunch to take on school trips.

Each year we organise a residential visit to Lockerbie Manor for our Primary 7 pupils. Communication regarding this visit takes place whilst pupils are in Primary 6. We provide this at this time in order to provide notice for our families to pay by instalments. We ensure that we consider the most cost-effective package for parents by not automatically selecting the same dates/ transport companies without contacting various approved providers. At this time, we also provide parent/ carers with a 'kit list', which allows time for families to consider required resources. We hold a residential appeal, where families are encouraged to donate outdoor clothing, waterproof clothing, wellies/ boots, sleeping bags etc that are no longer required but in good condition.

We explore external funding whenever possible to support families who may experience poverty related difficulties.

### **Extra-Curricular Clubs**

We offer a variety of After School and Lunchtime clubs, all of which are free for pupils to attend. There is at least 1 club offered to each year group across a school session. Clothing and kit are provided for sporting events including tracksuits, football strips etc. Any clothing kit required for events is laundered at school.

### **Learning at school**

We recognise that the cost of materials can soon add up for families. Pupils at Woodhead do not need to pay for any aspect of their core curriculum or learning activities. Stationery materials including pencils, pens, rulers etc are readily available in all classes and the Nursery playroom for children to access. Children can choose to bring their own equipment, but it is not required. As part of our planning for learning at home, activities should not have any financial implications for families.

### **Learning at home**

We ensure resources required for homework are kept to a minimum. If extra resources are required for learning at home, we will provide or offer additional time/ opportunity for work to be completed in school. ICT resources will be utilised where possible to support learning at home. If access to ICT resources is required and not available at home, we will ensure children are given additional time in school to complete learning tasks. We work with our

families to offer support for learning at home and modify expectations and tasks where required.

As part of homework, we limit online activities, such as Numeracy games, keeping these to a minimum. All our pupils are provided with a folder and jotter for Literacy tasks. We offer additional IT time in class to complete any online aspects of homework.

We hold curriculum clubs to offer support to targeted children in raising attainment in Literacy and Numeracy.

### **Fun Events**

Special events, days and activities are a fun part of school life and often raise valuable funds. However, we recognise that such events can create difficulties for some families and place added pressure. Each year we hold a fund-raising event in June as part of our 'Fit Planet health and wellbeing week'. All children participate in our fundraising events and no child would be refused the opportunity to participate due to donations not being received.

In addition to this, other fundraising dates such as non-uniform days are planned in advance, to ensure these are spread evenly across the school year. These dates are shared with our families in a calendar issued at the beginning of the school year. This year we will continue to organise *non-uniform days* and three of these will help to raise funds for our school with contributions of a small donation per family, where families are able to. Prior to PTA fundraising discos, we appeal for pre-loved Halloween costumes and Christmas jumpers which are added to our community larder and made available to any families who may require them.

As part of our special craft days, including Easter and Christmas, we provide craft materials should pupils require these.

### **Eating**

We realise that for some of our families food costs can be significant. We recognise that receiving Free School Meals can help. However not every family entitled to free meals applies for them and not every child receiving free meals takes them. Information is available on the school website and SLC website informing parents about Money-Matters and entitlement to Free School Meals, and how to apply.

Breakfast club is open daily to pupils from 8.15-8.45am, last admission at 8.35am. (Toast and milk/ water is available for pupils who require breakfast after this time).

Packed lunches for trips/outings are available for those children eligible for FSM and P1-5 pupils. Fruit is provided where possible, for any children who come to school without snack.

As part of our Health and Wellbeing curriculum, there is an increased focus on food technologies to raise awareness of healthy eating.

We also liaise with a local foodbank and provide food parcels from our community larder to support families.

## **Travelling**

There is a mixture of our children who walk to school or are brought to school by car or taxi. A bus is provided for some of our children by the Local Authority. Some pupils travel to school by bike/ scooter and we have open bike sheds in the school grounds for pupils to store their equipment. On 31st January 2022, the Scottish Government introduced the 'Free Bus Travel Scheme'. This scheme allows all young people aged between 5-21 to apply for a card which entitles them to free bus travel throughout Scotland. Pupils can apply for their card by accessing the Transport Scotland website for more information –

<https://www.transport.gov.scot/concessionary-travel/young-persons-free-bus-travelscheme/#overview>

## **Attitudes towards Poverty**

Our aim is to reduce the stigma of poverty for both our pupils and families. If you are aware of any examples where your child expresses worry or concern over any form of bullying they are experiencing with regard to financial issues, we would ask that this is communicated to us at the earliest opportunity. We take a proactive approach to supporting our families who experience any changes in financial circumstances. We have an open-door policy and encourage our parent/ carers to contact the school if they are experiencing any poverty-related difficulties.

On an annual basis, we gather views of our pupils and families on the Cost of the School Day and Participatory budget spend. We commit to participating in the *Challenge Poverty* week to raise awareness among our children and engage in shared discussions at assemblies.

## **Friendships**

Our staff have strong pastoral care and knowledge of our pupils. We teach our pupils about poverty related issues as part of our Health and Wellbeing programme and reinforce our school values during assemblies. We promote equality through our school uniform code to remove any peer pressures.

As a school, we would like the opportunity to support where possible. We encourage all our parent/carers who find themselves in a situation, at any point in their child's school career where they cannot financially support their child for whatever reason, to contact a member of the Senior Leadership Team, or a member of staff they feel comfortable talking with and have a supportive conversation. We are here to help in any way we can. We hope this will then lead to the school being able to offer the appropriate support/resource provision to allow pupils to receive as full and as rounded, a school experience as possible.