

Cost of the School Day Position Statement *(Updated October 2020)*

Carstairs Primary School, South Lanarkshire Council

At Carstairs Primary School we recognise the need to reduce the Cost of the School Day for all of our pupils and particularly for our pupils who are already experiencing poverty. We examine the School Day through the following headings; Uniform, Travel, Learning, Friendships, School Trips, Eating, Fun and School Clubs.

Uniform

Our school uniform consists of a royal blue school sweatshirt, a white polo shirt and black or grey trousers / skirt, along with black school shoes. Families can purchase branded uniform items from ALJ Workwear in Lanark. We do not insist on badged sweatshirts/polo shirts and parents are welcome to consider options available in supermarkets and other clothing retailers. We have created a uniform 'Pop-Up Shop' made up of pre-loved items which can be accessed in the 'bubble' area of our school's front foyer.

In order to place an order, families are encouraged to make use of our parent led order form link, which is available via our school app and our website, using an anonymous code system.

Travel

Some of our children travel to school by school bus. School transport is provided by the Local Authority. We are aware that this could mean some children are not able to attend after school clubs. We therefore ensure that we have clubs available at other appropriate times within the school day as well as after school clubs to alleviate the pressure of children being collected from clubs at 4pm.

Learning

Children at Carstairs 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 although we are aware that many children like to do this. We currently have a procedure for learners to borrow equipment if they need it for homework (e.g. a calculator or craft equipment). We also allow access to our computers for children who may have difficulty accessing the internet at home. Our aim is to ensure that all learners can complete activities no matter their family circumstances.

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 through our curriculum within such areas as Financial Education, Health and Wellbeing and Global Citizenship work.

School Trips *(on hold due to Coronavirus restrictions October 2020)*

Currently our trips are planned each year in relation to learning opportunities and relevant points of interest. Some of our outings do have a cost involved while others do not. We reduce the cost of outings by subsidising bus costs from our school funds and our Parent Council (Carstairs Parent Partnership) support us with this. We also aim to give families as much notice as possible of cost involved. We make arrangements to ensure that excursions such as our Outdoor Centre residential experience can be paid in instalments over a longer period of time. We discretely offer support to families that we know may be experiencing difficulties.

(Within session 20-21 we aim to ensure that all costs are kept to the absolute minimum necessary. Should our planned P7 residential week to Lockerbie Manor go ahead, we would seek additional subsidies for this, via grant funding and possible use of Pupil Equity Funding).

Eating at school

Last school year we had approximately 19.4% of pupils in receipt of Free School Meals, by June 2020. We are aware that there may be a stigma associated with a free lunch and we try to reduce this by never discussing who has a free school meal. By using ParentPay for parents to pay for lunches this removes any stigma previously associated with children not paying for their lunch with cash. We estimate that approximately 90% of pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals take up their entitlement. Free School Meal entitlement is now allocated automatically if a family has qualifying benefits. This information can be accessed within our Handbook.

Fun Events

Carstairs Primary recognise that events planned for enjoyment can actually put added pressure on to families. We look carefully at attendance and participation in these events in order to see if there are any poverty-related patterns that require action. When young people cannot afford to take part in any activity we ensure they can still experience it by ensuring families know that those experiencing financial difficulties can speak confidentially to the school and there will be an arrangement put in place to support them and their children discretely. When undertaking school or Parent Council (Carstairs Parent Partnership) fund raising events we recognise that not all families are able to contribute and also deal with this in a discrete manner. To participate in some of our events we simply suggest that voluntary donations are welcome and give no fixed amount.

During this time, within the current global pandemic, we have agreed through consultation with our parents that only one fundraising activity that encourages parental payment of any kind, will run within the school year (Christmas designs, parental choice).

Period Poverty

We strongly believe that no child should feel embarrassed or have their school day negatively impacted by limited access to sanitary products. Support is available for our upper school girls to this end, with sanitary products freely and readily available for them to help themselves to in the WC in our main foyer area. This is set up in such a way that no girl should ever have to be in a position that they need to ask someone for access to these products: girls can help themselves, as required, to the clearly labelled box available in this WC for them. This is restocked, as required at no cost to our families.

School Clubs

At Carstairs Primary we have many clubs including dance, tennis, netball, football, multi-sports, judo etc. We do not charge for pupils to take part. Some clubs may require specific equipment e.g. badminton racquet, tennis racquet and we do what we can to ensure the necessary equipment is available for all children in the school.

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. As part of our School Improvement 2019/20 we will be focusing on;

- Maintaining and continuing to enhance our school uniform 'Pop Up Shop', in partnership with Carstairs Parent Partnership.
- Introducing a Halloween costume and Christmas Jumper Pop-Up Shop option, in partnership with Carstairs Parent Partnership.
- Monitoring club participation and continuing to offer clubs within the school day in support of pupils who may have issues with transport. (*October 2020 – lunchtime clubs only*)
- Continuing to ensure that we as a school and our Parent Partnership group are alert to our concerns around The Cost of the School Day when planning events and activities.

- Giving consideration, in conjunction with our Parent Council (Carstairs Parent Partnership) to use of varied methods of fundraising, eg) bag-packing, sourcing grants, where appropriate.
- Raising awareness of local authority and community supports available for families.

This bespoke statement for Carstairs Primary School, was created after all primary establishments within the Lanark Learning Community reflected on CoSD guidance.
(This statement will be reviewed in June 2021)