

Cost of the School Day Policy

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.

Families are able to simply help themselves to this stock, at any time without any discussion, with bags provided alongside the clothing. Stock is replenished, through donations from parents wishing to recycle pre loved uniform, at regular intervals and is easily accessible to all who wish to do so.

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 have a procedure for learners to borrow equipment if they need it for homework (e.g. a calculator or craft equipment). We also provide access to our computers for children who may have difficulty accessing such technology at home. Our aim is always 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

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 use any pots of money we have available to minimise any cost to families. Where it is voted for by our community, participatory budget may be used to support us in this area. 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. In addition, we seek grant funding wherever possible to reach as close to zero cost for families as we possibly can.

Eating at school

Last school year we had approximately 27% of pupils in receipt of Free School Meals, by June 2024. 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) fundraising events we recognise and fully respect 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.

Consultation with our families led to us reducing involvement with charities, in favour of any carefully considered fundraising is centred around raising funds that our children in

school directly benefit from. We continue to highlight the work of various charities through our curriculum, but focus any donation requests on those that are in direct support of our learners' experiences.

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 closest to the school changing rooms. 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 never charge for pupils to take part. Some clubs may require specific equipment e.g. badminton racquet, tennis racquet and we ensure the necessary equipment is available for all children in the school.

Other Information

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.

We are committed to:

- Maintaining our school uniform 'Pop Up Shop', in partnership with Carstairs Parent Partnership and our Parent Forum.
- Maintaining a Halloween costume and Christmas Jumper Pop-Up Shop option (where appropriate), in partnership with Carstairs Parent Partnership and our Parent Forum.
- Monitoring club participation and continuing to offer clubs within the school day in support of pupils who may have issues with transport.
- Continuing to ensure that we as a school and our Parent Partnership group are alert to our concerns around 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.

- Ensuring that our community are involved in Participatory Budgeting annually and giving consideration to closing the poverty related gap, when considering options available to vote for.
- Liaising with relevant partners and agencies to help us fully minimise cost of the school day as a barrier to learning.
- Signposting families to relevant partners and agencies that can support financial management beyond school life.