

Cost of the School Day Position Statement

Carstairs Junction Primary School, South Lanarkshire Council

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

Uniform

Our current uniform is grey/black trousers/skirts/tartan pinafores, wine sweatshirts and white poloshirts. Families can purchase uniforms from ALJ Workwear in Lanark. We do not insist on badged sweatshirts/poloshirts. Next session we intend to update our practice by having a 'previously owned' stall for parents to select items of uniform which have been previously owned for reuse. This will allow families to pick up some items free of charge which may help with uniform.

Travel

The majority of our children travel to school on foot. Transport is provided for the majority of pupils in our supported classes by the Local Authority. We are aware that this could mean many children are not able to attend after school clubs and we therefore ensure that we have lunch time activities as well as after school clubs to alleviate the pressure of children being collected from school at 4pm.

Learning

Children at Carstairs Junction 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 young people to borrow equipment if they need it for homework (e.g a calculator or craft equipment).

Friendships

We ensure that any pupil experiencing poverty-related bullying has a way of reporting this in confidence. We do teach young people about poverty related issues as part of our regular PSE programme. We intend to gather the views of our young people and families on the Cost of the School Day and involve them in decision making around this.

School Trips

Currently our trips are planned each year in relation to learning opportunities and relevant points of interest. External funding is used where possible and our Parent Council fundraising group also subsidise transport. We have a policy for families with more than one child and support them.

Eating at school

Last school year we had 35% of pupils who were in receipt of Free School Meals. 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, instead we always inform the children that their parents have prepaid to avoid any unnecessary anxiety around this. We estimate that a small percentage of pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals do not take up their entitlement. We intend to provide new P1 parents with the necessary information at the transition events to allow them to apply for Free School Meals should they think they would qualify to ensure all parents who may be entitled to Free

School Meals take up this opportunity. Reminders will also be provided in newsletters throughout June to all current families of the school to ensure their entitlement carries on into the new session.

Fun Events

Carstairs Junction_Primary School recognise that events planned for enjoyment can actually put added pressure on to families. We intend to 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 in place to support them and their children discretely. We currently fund raise by carrying out dress down days and understand that not all families are able to contribute. Our Parent Council hold an annual Christmas Fayre which is our main fundraiser.

School Clubs

At Carstairs Junction_Primary we have the following clubs; dance, tennis, rugby, multi-sports etc. We do not charge for pupils to take part. Some clubs may require specific equipment e.g 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. In our Improvement Plan for 2019/20 we will be focusing on

- Planning events for the year to provide advance notice for parents.
- Raise awareness of local charity organisations e.g. Clydesdale Foodbank, Baby Bank who may be able to help.
- Gather the views of parents with regards to what/when we ask for money to gain an confidential understanding of the views of the parent forum which, in turn will inform our future practice.
- Offer a drop in clinic to support the completion of applications for Free School Meals/Footwear and Clothing Grants.
- Offering regular lunch time clubs to all pupils to alleviate issues with transport at the end of an after school club.

This statement was created in collaboration between all primary establishments within Lanark Learning Community, but reflects the current practice at Carstairs Junction Primary School and ELC.