

# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## STEP TWO

# INVOLVE YOUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Now that you've laid the groundwork and planned what you're going to do, it's time to make sure that everyone is included in the discussion.

### In Step Two you will be:

- Auditing costs across the school year to understand what families are being asked to pay for, and when
- Asking pupils about cost barriers and seeking their suggestions for how to overcome them
- Asking parents and carers about cost pressures - Parent Councils are great partners to support this
- Asking staff about costs, their impact and how they can be reduced or removed.

**To support your work in Step Two, this section of the toolkit includes resources for discussions with all groups – children and young people, parents and carers and all staff members:**

- [The Cost of the School Day clock](#)
- [Cost of the School Day flashcards](#)
- [Cost of the School Day wall frieze](#)
- [Meet Ross, Humeira and Jessica: case studies for children and young people](#)
- [Survey for children and young people](#)
- [Cost of the School Day reflective questions](#)
- [What are the costs of your school day?](#)
- [Survey for school staff](#)
- [Parent Council resource](#)
- [Survey for parents and carers](#)

# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY CLOCK

This clock can help to prompt discussion about school costs and financial barriers to participation with groups of staff, children, young people or parents/carers.

### Accompanying prompt questions

- What costs are involved in each part of the school day?
- What problems or barriers might children and young people from low income households face throughout the school day?
- What does the school do now to prevent or help with this?
- What else might help?



# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



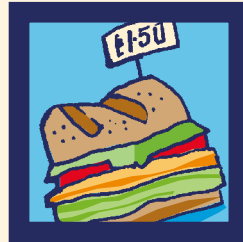
**10:30**  
FRIENDSHIPS AT SCHOOL



**11:00**  
SCHOOL TRIPS



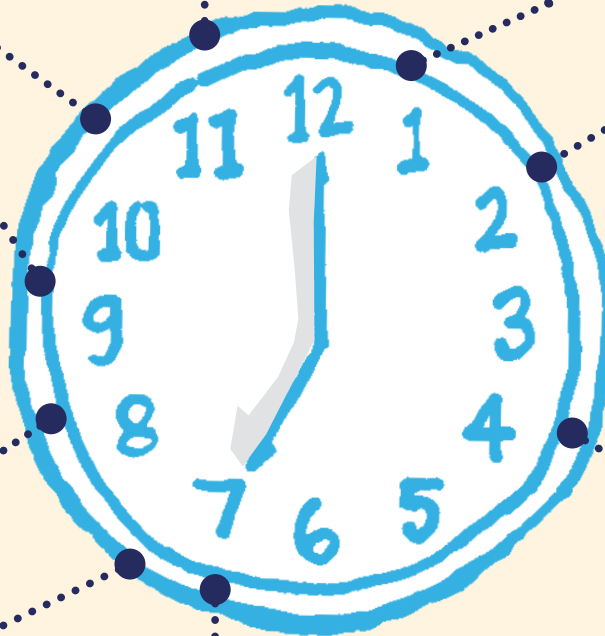
**12:40**  
EATING AT SCHOOL



**14:00**  
FUN EVENTS



**09:15**  
LEARNING AT SCHOOL



**08:00**  
TRAVELLING TO SCHOOL



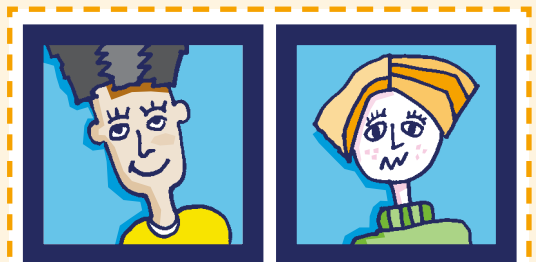
**16:00**  
SCHOOL CLUBS



**07:00**  
GETTING DRESSED FOR SCHOOL



**19:00**  
HOME LEARNING



ATTITUDES TOWARDS POVERTY

# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



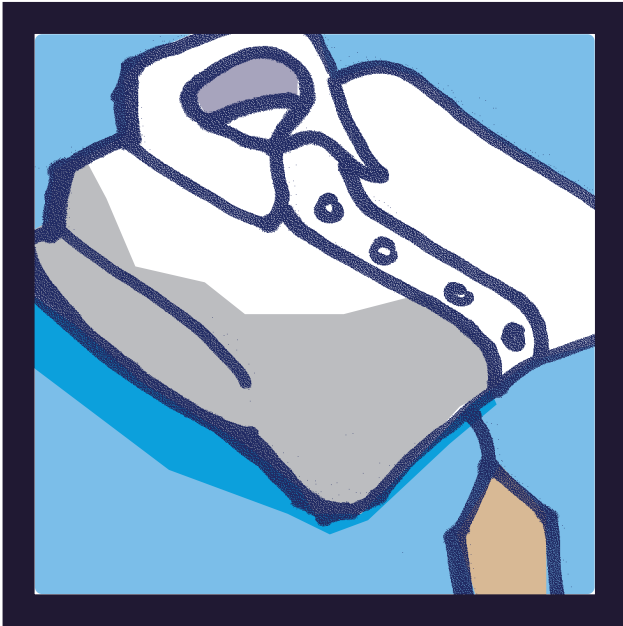
## COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY FLASHCARD RESOURCE

This **Cost of the School Day Resource Pack** contains 10 subject area flashcards and 1 money card, each for printing out and laminating. This pack is intended to be used in a group session where the participants determine how much a certain day-to-day activity costs in real terms – the more pound coins piled up on the flashcard the more that activity costs. Print out the flashcard sheets and trim back to A5 size. Print out several copies of the last sheet, which has images of pound coins, and cut out to shape. You're now ready to find out the cost of the school day!





# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## GETTING DRESSED FOR SCHOOL



# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## TRAVELLING TO SCHOOL



# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## FRIENDSHIPS AT SCHOOL



# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## LEARNING AT SCHOOL



# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## SCHOOL TRIPS



# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## FUN EVENTS





# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## EATING AT SCHOOL



# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



# ATTITUDES TOWARDS POVERTY



# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## SCHOOL CLUBS



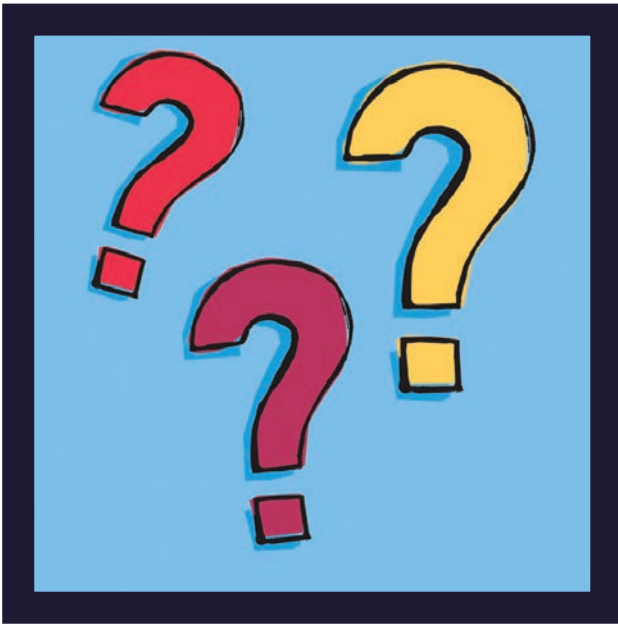
# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



# HOME LEARNING



# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



ANYTHING  
ELSE?



# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY





# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY

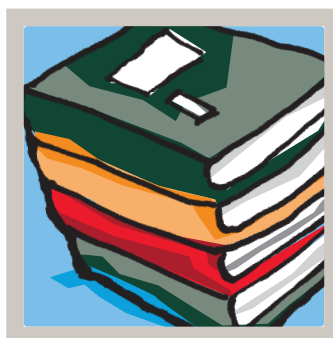
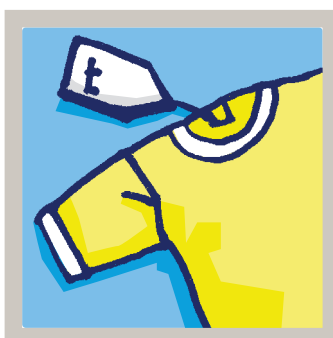
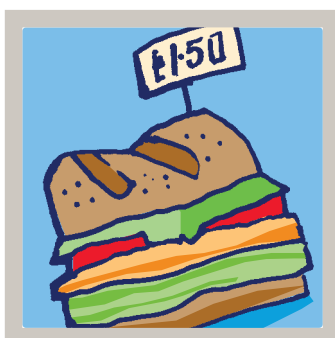
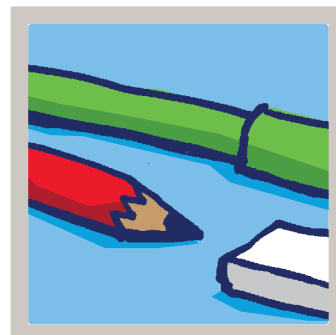
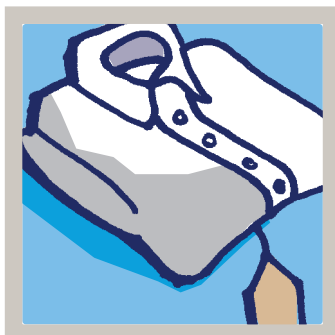


## COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY WALL FRIEZE

The Cost of the School Day images in the Flashcard Resource can be printed out in A3 and stuck together to make a wall frieze. This can be used at Parents' Evenings, at assemblies or at other school events where you are seeking the opinions of as many people as possible.

Participants can:

- put sticky dots on the top 3 parts of the day which cost them a lot or which they consider problematic
- write their thoughts about different parts of the school day on Post It notes and stick it on the appropriate image
- write down and post their thoughts into a confidential postbox next to the frieze
- look at the images and discuss them briefly with a person staffing the frieze.



# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## MEET ROSS, HUMEIRA AND JESSICA: CASE STUDIES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Finding out about the Cost of the School Day from children and young people's perspectives means talking about poverty and its impact. Some children and young people in your school may be experiencing these issues in their own lives.

The stories here, featuring characters called Ross, Humeira and Jessica, can be used to broach these potentially sensitive topics in Cost of the School Day sessions with children and young people. These scenarios touch lightly on some of the challenges facing low income families like the cost of living, family stress, housing, access to childcare and difficulties finding suitable employment, but focusing on a fictional character's circumstances means there is no expectation that children and young people will share their own experiences and they maintain control of whether - if at all - they ever mention anything about themselves or their own lives.

Feel free to adapt the tone of story and the character's age and interests depending on the age group you are working with. Pictures can be used to illustrate the story as appropriate. As an alternative to discussion, children can draw pictures of the characters and their families, their thoughts and feelings and the scenarios they come up with.



### 1. Meet Ross

Ross is 10. Ross has just moved to this area with his mum and little sister Amelie, who is 3. Ross is about to start at your school. He's a bit nervous because he doesn't know what to expect. He wants to fit in and be happy. He hopes he makes friends and that the teachers are nice. He hopes he'll be able to do the work and that there's a computing club there like there was at his old school.

Ross gets on pretty well with his family – well, Amelie is a bit of a pain sometimes but he likes her really. His mum used to work part time in Tesco near where they used to stay but since they moved here she's finding it difficult to find another job which will fit in with Amelie's nursery hours. "This means that there isn't a lot of money at home and sometimes Ross knows that his mum is a bit stressed about paying bills and things like that. She quite often tells Ross that they can't afford the things he wants, like new video games and a phone.

# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## 2. Meet Humeira

Humeira is 15. She has just moved to this area with her mum and her brother Irfan, 8, and she's going to be starting at your school. Humeira's mum and dad have recently separated and they're living with her elderly grandmother who her mum is helping to care for. Humeira is sad to leave her old school, her friends and her dad behind but happy to spend more time with her grandmother who she enjoys cooking and baking with.

Humeira wants to fit in at her new school and make friends. She's had a look at the uniform online and it seems ok. She thinks that her mum is going to take her to buy it soon. She's a bit worried about being behind after moving schools halfway through the year and hopes she'll be able to sit exams in all the subjects she was doing before. Home Economics and Drama are her favourites. She wants to be a professional chef and plans to find some work experience in a local restaurant.

Her mum gets some money from the government for helping to care for Humeira's grandmother but she is struggling to find work with hours that fit in with her caring duties and also being able to pick Irfan up after school. She is sure something suitable will turn up soon.

Humeira knows her mum is worried about money and doesn't want to stress her out too much. She often plays with her little brother in the evening so her mum can get some time to herself.



## 3. Meet Jessica

Jessica is 11. She has three sisters: Cara 8, Libby 6, and Eva who is only 3 months old. They are all quite noisy and leave toys everywhere around the house, especially on her side of the bedroom. Jessica shares a bedroom with two of her sisters and her baby sister sleeps in the other bedroom with her mum and dad. The family is waiting to hear from the council whether they can move into a bigger house and maybe then she won't have to share a room.

Jessica likes when all the family get together and have movie nights with popcorn, but sometimes finds the house is really noisy and it's difficult to have quiet time alone. Her favourite thing to do is to go to school football practice on a Thursday after school where she can hang out with her friends and get some peace from her noisy sisters.

Jessica's dad works long hours as a delivery driver and can be home late so she helps her mum out around the house by doing the washing up and entertaining her sisters. Her mum is on maternity leave right now but says she will have to go back to work soon because things are getting more expensive and she's being 'eaten out of house and home.'

Jessica is in P7 and will be going to secondary school next year. She's looking forward to her P7 transition visit and the leavers' activities the school are putting on. She can't wait to come home and tell her family all about them.

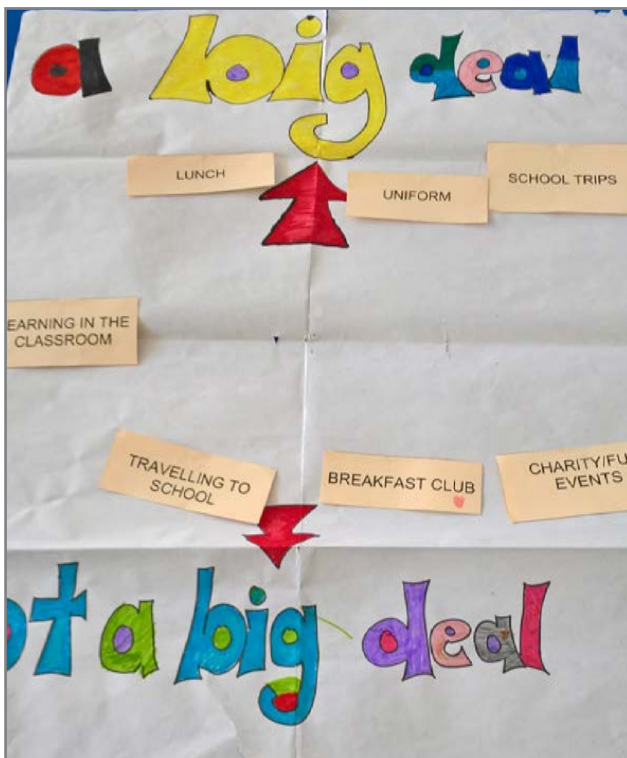
# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## Key questions to explore

Ross, Humeira and Jessica are all part of families where there isn't a lot of money to spare. This is really common – over a quarter of all children and young people in Scotland are living on low incomes. Today we're going to talk about a typical day in your school and try to think about things from Ross, Humeira or Jessica's point of view – what would things be like for them at your school?

The [Cost of the School Day Clock](#) and [Flashcard Resource](#) depicting different parts of the school day can be used as visual prompts when discussing Ross, Humeira or Jessica's school day.



Scale showing which parts of the school day would be a 'big deal' or 'no big deal' for Ross

- From the start to the end of the school day: what kinds of things would s/he need to pay for?
- What sorts of things cost a lot? Is there anything you think s/he would find it difficult to afford?
- How would s/he fit in at your school?
- If s/he wasn't able to afford to pay for something, what would happen?
- Is there anything s/he would miss out on doing throughout the school day because of money? Which things would be a big deal? How would s/he feel and what would he do?
- Would s/he ever feel different or left out because of not having much money? How would he feel and what would he do?
- Would s/he be able to get any help from teachers? How easy or difficult would it be for him/her to talk to them? What about their mums or dads?
- What sorts of things does your school do right now to make sure that s/he could take part and feel happy at school? Do they work well? Why or why not?
- If you were in charge of how the school is run, what would you do to make sure that s/he could take part in everything and feel happy and included?



# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SURVEY

A short survey, worded appropriately for children's age and stage, can offer an anonymous way of offering opinions on Cost of the School Day and may be suitable for some. Ideally it will be used as one of a range of ways to consult with children and young people.

For children and young people who would not be comfortable completing the survey on their own, questions and instructions can be read out to the group with responses completed individually. Alternatively, the questions in the survey can be used instead to prompt group discussion and activities.

### SAMPLE INTRODUCTION

*"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.*

*This survey asks you questions about costs at school and what would happen if a pupil wasn't able to afford some costs. You don't need to be in that position yourself to take part in this survey – everybody's views are important in making sure that your school is welcoming for all pupils.*

*We will look at what everyone says and work with you to try to improve things. We promise to keep you updated about what's happening."*

**To complete the survey online you can create your own copy by going to <https://bit.ly/2tYGf0A> and clicking on 'duplicate this form and start using it as your own'. You will need your Glow login details.**

# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



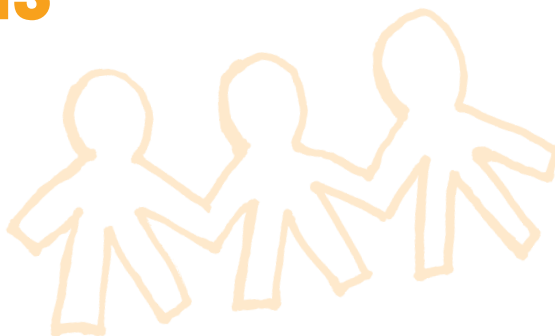
## COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

### 08:00 Travelling to school

- What effect are travel costs likely to have on low income families in the school?
- Do transport costs affect attendance and late coming?
- Do we know what parents think about transport costs?
- Thinking of the full range of activities provided at school, who takes part in them? Are there patterns by income?
- Which activities are likely to incur additional travel costs and are there alternative ways to do them?
- Are there ways in which travel can be made more affordable for low income families?
- Has everyone in your school applied for under 22s free bus travel?

### 10:30 Friendships at school

- How does income affect friendships in the school?
- Are there ways to minimise or control differences in what children have and bring to school?
- Is the basis of poverty based bullying named and discussed?
- What kind of awareness-raising actually works for young people? What could change attitudes and behaviour?



### 07:00 Getting dressed for school

- Are all eligible families receiving school clothing grants?
- What impact is the current school uniform policy likely to have on low income children and young people?
- Do we know what parents think about the cost of uniform?
- Is the school communicating affordable options to parents successfully?
- Are parents able to pay in instalments?
- How is the school currently approaching non-uniform compliance with pupils?
- How can uniform based bullying be reduced?
- Are rewards linked to the consistent wearing of school uniform?

### 09:15 Learning at school

- What do children and young people need to pay for?
- If a child or young person didn't have resources, how would school policy or individual practices impact on him or her?
- What is school policy on lending resources and is this applied consistently?
- Which young people take which subjects at certificate level? Are there patterns by income in subjects which incur additional costs?

### 11:00 School trips

- Who goes on trips? Are there patterns by income?
- Do we know what parents think about the cost of trips?
- What proportion of our trips are subsidised?
- What system is in place to subsidise trips and is this done in a non-stigmatising way?
- How are trips spaced out across the year?
- How aware are staff of external funding sources for trips?
- How can we minimise pressure on low income families while still offering a range of opportunities and experiences to children?





# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## 12:40 Eating at school

- Are all eligible families receiving free school meals?
- How good is your free meal uptake? How could you increase it further?
- What is breakfast club uptake like and why? Are there ways to boost uptake?
- How can free meals be offered in a non-stigmatising way on trips?

## 16:00 School clubs

- Who does and doesn't take part in clubs? Are there patterns by income?
- Are there hidden transport, equipment or materials costs in the clubs we offer?
- Are there ways to remove costs for equipment and travel?
- Are there ways for clubs to offer an exciting range of opportunities while staying free or very low cost?

## 19:00 Home learning

- Does everyone in your school have access to the digital devices they need to learn at home?
- Where can children and young people access computers and the internet in the school and the local community? Do they know about this?
- Could home craft tasks be putting financial pressure on families? Are there alternative ways to approach tasks?
- What is school policy on lending resources and is this applied consistently?
- How is homework linked to systems of reward and/ or sanctions?

## 14:00 Fun events

- Who does and doesn't take part in fun events? Are there patterns by income?
- Is attendance affected by fun events at school?
- How are fun events spaced out across the school year and how much notice is provided?
- Are additional costs for transport and food considered when planning events?
- What happens when young people want to take part but don't have the money?
- How can fundraising happen in a non-stigmatising and inclusive way?
- How can fun events be designed so that everyone is involved and nobody feels left out?
- How can staff help pupils with costs without them having to ask?
- How can fun events take place without pressure being placed on children to pay and sticking out for not doing so?

## Understanding and attitudes towards poverty

- How much do staff know about poverty, its impact and the local context? What would be useful to discuss and explore as part of professional development?
- Have children and young people had the opportunity to discuss issues surrounding poverty and how it affects them? How can we build on young people's interest and willingness to address these topics openly and empathically?
- How much do you know about parent's opinions and experiences on these issues?
- How good are we at promoting financial entitlements to families and ensuring take up?



# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## WHAT ARE THE COSTS OF YOUR SCHOOL DAY?

This group discussion exercise is designed to help you explore and estimate likely costs for families in your school, providing a baseline measure against which progress can be measured.

For each part of the school day, you are asked to reflect on how much money families are likely to spend. Refer to school policies and also to your knowledge and experience of how things are done in your school.

### Please note:

- Add any missing items to the boxes in each section. Leave blank any boxes which are not applicable to your school
- Costs vary depending on age and stage of children. Consider the perspectives of different learners to understand costs at different stages, e.g. a P1, P4 and P7 pupil or an S1, S4 and S5/6 pupil
- Some costs may not be mandatory - consider though what children and young people are likely to need and want and what parents/carers are likely to try to provide for their children
- In each category, choose the time period – weekly, monthly or annually – which gives you the clearest picture of cost pressures on family budgets, e.g. annually for larger irregular costs like uniform and trips and weekly/monthly for regular costs like travel and lunch
- The discussion required to reach decisions will be invaluable in understanding where costs come from and when they are most significant so please record key discussion points in the summary notes boxes.

What are the most significant costs for families at your school?

What are pupils from low income families at risk of missing out on?

What times of year might be most difficult financially for families?

What are the hidden costs of participation in school life?

# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## 1 UNIFORM COSTS

Estimate uniform costs in the table below. Please take into account the school uniform policy, growth of child, changes of clothes required for washing, wear and tear throughout the school year and factors which result in additional costs, e.g. braiding, change of tie, unusual colours, embroidered logos or specialist suppliers.



- Consider costs for those families receiving clothing grants and those not receiving clothing grants
- **Please choose the most useful time period for you – weekly, monthly or yearly – when calculating costs.**

Estimated uniform costs			
Items	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly
Recommended school uniform			
PE kit			
Shoes			
Coats/jackets			
Schoolbag			
Other (please write below)			
<b>TOTAL</b>			

**Summary notes** e.g. highest costs, times of the year with highest costs, factors which could lead to additional costs, current uptake of clothing grant, impact of receiving clothing grant, ways in which the school tries to reduce costs...

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# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## 2 TRAVEL COSTS

Estimate travel costs in the table below. Take into account daily travel from home to school and back, any additional travel for after school activities, the impact of under 22s free bus travel and the eligibility policy surrounding free transport in your local authority area.

- Please choose the most useful time period for you – weekly, monthly or yearly – when calculating costs.



Estimated travel costs			
	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly
Bus			
Train			
Car			
Other (please write below)			
<b>TOTAL</b>			

**Summary notes** e.g. groups likely to have the highest costs, considerations on eligibility for free transport, time of the year with highest costs, instances where additional travel costs apply, ways in which the school tries to reduce costs...

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# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## 3 LEARNING COSTS

Estimate any costs associated with learning at school in the table below. Take into account school policy and variations in teacher practices surrounding provision and lending of materials.

- Please choose the most useful time period for you – weekly, monthly or yearly – when calculating costs.



Estimated learning at school costs			
	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly
Stationery and equipment, e.g. folders, calculators			
Subject costs, e.g. Home Economics, Technical, Art and Design			
Materials for craft projects			
Study materials e.g. Past Papers			
Other (please write below)			
<b>TOTAL</b>			

**Summary notes** e.g. groups likely to have the highest costs, stages and times of the year with highest costs, any variations in provision of materials across the school, ways in which the school tries to reduce costs...

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# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## 4 SCHOOL TRIP COSTS

Estimate costs for school trips in the table below. Take into account nominal fees for transport to free venues and any hidden costs involved in participation (e.g. spending money and money for food if not taking school lunches).

- Please choose the most useful time period for you – weekly, monthly or yearly – when calculating costs.



Estimated trips cost			
	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly
Day trips related to curriculum			
Residential trips			
Other trips			
Equipment for residential trips (e.g. sleeping bags, clothes, toiletries)			
Other (please write below)			
<b>TOTAL</b>			

**Summary notes** e.g. groups likely to participate/not participate, frequency of trips, notice given, significant hidden costs, stages and times of the year with highest costs, ways in which the school tries to reduce costs...

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# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## 5 EATING AT SCHOOL COSTS

Estimate costs for eating at school in the table below. Take into account free school meal (FSM) entitlement and uptake, cost of school lunches and the cost of food in local shops if pupils leave school at lunchtime.

- Please consider costs for children receiving free school meals and not receiving free school meals.
- **Please choose the most useful time period for you – weekly, monthly or yearly – when calculating costs.**



### Estimated eating at school costs

	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly
Breakfast club			
Snacks			
Lunch			
Other (please write below)			
<b>TOTAL</b>			

**Summary notes** e.g. groups likely to have the highest costs, current uptake of FSM, impact of P1-3 FSM and FSM uptake in later years, ways in which the school tries to reduce costs...

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# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## 6 SCHOOL CLUB/ACTIVITIES COSTS

Estimate costs for attending school clubs and taking part in extra-curricular activities in the table below. Take into account the full range of activities and opportunities available within the school and any hidden costs involved in participation (e.g. travelling to competitions, appropriate sportswear).



- Please choose the most useful time period for you – weekly, monthly or yearly – when calculating costs.

Estimated clubs/activities costs			
	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly
Entry fees			
Equipment and materials			
Clothes			
Transport			
Other (please write below)			
<b>TOTAL</b>			

**Summary notes** e.g. groups likely to participate/not participate, significant hidden costs, stages and times of the year with highest costs, ways in which the school tries to reduce costs...

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# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## 7 FUN EVENT COSTS

Estimate costs for participating in fun events at school in the table below. Take into account the full range of events throughout the school year, including those promoted as optional which pupils may still want to take part in.

- Please choose the most useful time period for you – weekly, monthly or yearly – when calculating costs.



Estimated fun event costs			
	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly
Social events, e.g. discos, ceilidhs, Proms, leavers dances			
Seasonal events, e.g. Christmas Fayres and pantomimes, Easter bonnet competitions			
Special days, e.g. World Book Day			
Fundraising days, e.g. Comic Relief, non-uniform days			
School photographs			
Other (please write below)			
<b>TOTAL</b>			

**Summary notes** e.g. groups likely to participate/not participate, frequency of events, notice given, stages and times of the year with highest costs, ways in which the school tries to reduce costs...

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# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## 8 HOME LEARNING COSTS

Estimate home learning costs in the table below. Take into account school policy and variations in teacher practices surrounding provision and lending of materials.

- Please choose the most useful time period for you – weekly, monthly or yearly – when calculating costs.



### Estimated fun event costs

	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly
Stationery and equipment			
Devices and software			
Internet access			
Books and other study materials			
Craft materials			
Other (please write below)			
<b>TOTAL</b>			

**Summary notes** e.g. groups likely to have the highest costs, stages and times of the year with highest costs, any variations in provision of materials across the school, ways in which the school tries to reduce costs...

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# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## SURVEY FOR SCHOOL STAFF

Questions contained in this survey can help you hear from school staff about:

- awareness of poverty in your school and ways in which it affects pupils
- barriers to participation which might exist at school for pupils from low income households

- existing approaches to reducing or removing these barriers
- additional ideas to support participation and positive school experiences

Results can be collated to support Cost of the School Day improvement planning.

### SAMPLE INTRODUCTION

*“Addressing the Cost of the School Day involves hearing from pupils, parents/ carers and staff to understand where school costs impact on participation and how cost barriers for children and young people can be dealt with.*

*This survey is a chance for you as staff members to contribute your thoughts on costs, highlight any good practice in the school that we can build on and tell us what more should be done to support pupils and their families.”*

**To complete the survey online you can create your own copy by going to <https://bit.ly/2KQqPmm> and clicking on ‘duplicate this form and start using it as your own’. You will need your Glow login details.**

# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## PARENT COUNCIL RESOURCE

This resource was originally developed in Glasgow with the former Glasgow Parent Council Forum. The National Parent Forum of Scotland then added rural and island parent and carer perspectives to the resource.

Almost 1 in 4 children across Scotland are officially recognised as living in poverty.

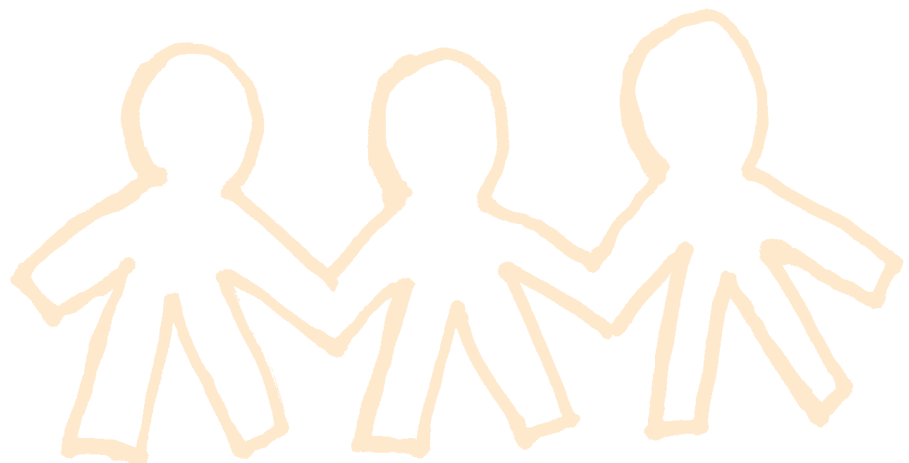
Insufficient household income can mean that some children and young people don't have the resources needed for school and can't easily afford to take part in school activities which cost money. This can put them at risk of missing out

on opportunities at school and feeling different, excluded and unhappy.

Parent Councils have a key role to play as the voice for parents within the school - highlighting to the school where costs are affecting parents and working with the school to make changes to minimise the impact of cost on children's experience of school.

This resource is designed to help Parent Councils:

- identify where costs are affecting low income families in their school
- provide simple actions that Parent Councils could take to help.





# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## SCHOOL UNIFORM

Schools set their own uniform policy. Parent Councils can have a big influence in this and can be involved in developing a policy that best suits the needs of the families in the school.

### School clothing grants and buying uniform

Parents on certain benefits can access a clothing grant to help with school uniform costs. All eligible families across Scotland can access a new minimum grant of at least £120 per primary school aged child, and £150 per secondary school aged child, per year. Details are available on local authority websites and on [mygov.scot](https://mygov.scot).

- Could a parent buy their child's school uniform, for the full school year, with the clothing grant?
- How does the school promote the clothing grant to parents?
- Is there a stigma attached to applying for the grant?
- Can the school help parents to complete clothing grant forms (or sign post parents to support services)?
- Does the school or Parent Council offer any support with buying a uniform?

### Reviewing the uniform

- What uniform do pupils need to have in your school?
- Can parents buy uniform from supermarkets or do they have to go to a single, specialist supplier?
- Do children need to wear any branded items (e.g. polo-shirt with school logo)?
- What do children need to have for PE?
- Is there an indoor and outdoor kit required?
- Has the school uniform changed in the past year?
- If there was a change, did all children have to purchase a new uniform?

# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## School attitudes to uniform

- What happens if children don't have the correct uniform? Are staff responses consistent and poverty aware?
- Are children sanctioned if they don't have the correct uniform, shoes, PE kit etc?
- Can children take part if they don't have the correct clothing?

## GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES FROM AROUND SCOTLAND

- 'We helped set up a shop, run by children, to sell reused school uniform.'
- 'We sourced a new supplier of school uniforms - local supermarket.'
- 'School uniform is shirt and tie. No embroidered items. Stopped gym kit uniform. Any shorts and top accepted.'
- 'Our Eco group now recycle school ties and pass them for free to our first year pupils.'
- 'We have a 'help yourself' box of uniform in the school reception.'
- 'As a Parent Council we started a uniform shop which enabled us to sell uniform to parents at cost price. We also run a uniform savings scheme from Jan-May to help parents save for the cost of new uniform.'
- 'People in our small community don't like everyone knowing their business so our school displays prominent signs telling parents who to contact in the Local Authority to claim.'
- 'We have altered our policy so that all items can be bought in online supermarkets and supplied cheaply by post.'

I have a couple of big jumpers and I'm not getting a big winter jacket till my birthday which is a few weeks away and I'll go into class and the teachers are like "take it off" and I'm like "I'm freezing, I don't have a big jacket to wear!"

Student, S5

# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## TRAVELLING TO SCHOOL

Transport costs are significant for low income families and can affect children and young people's attendance and participation at school. In each local authority, there is no financial support for public transport provided for children and young people living less than a certain distance from their catchment school (generally 2-3 miles). In more rural areas, own transport is a necessity rather than a luxury and families can struggle to meet the fuel and running costs of everyday journeys to school. Young people under the age of 22 are now eligible for free bus travel, and it's worth reminding everyone within your school community that they can apply for the National Entitlement Card (NEC).

### Reviewing travel

- How do pupils get to school?
- If the school offers support with transport costs, who benefits?
- Does the school offer transport for pupils to attend extracurricular activities? (after-school clubs, supported study)
- Is there a charge for families to use this service?

### Travel and accessing after-school activities

- Do children who use school buses access after-school activities?
- Do children who use school buses access supported study?
- Are there activities/ supported study available during lunch break?

Transport is a huge issue for us in our community. Even if an extra activity is free, the cost of fuel is enough to mean my child can't go as there is no available bus.

Parent

# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES FROM AROUND SCOTLAND

- 'Our parent council is running a survey of children dependent on school transport to find out if they would like to access clubs/ supported study etc. If there is sufficient interest we hope to fund taxis to help children get safely home.'
- 'Our Parent Council has set up a scheme where each parent who drives to school tries to fill every seat in their car with other pupils to save journeys for the other parents.'

We don't qualify for bus travel as we live within 3 miles of the school but there is no pavement or lighting for some of the journey so I have to drive my child.

Parent

# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## FUNDRAISING & FUN EVENTS

Special days, events and activities are a fun part of school life and often raise valuable funds to subsidise trips and provide additional resources. However, fun events can create difficulties for some children due to lack of immediate funds, hidden costs and feeling embarrassed and marginalised if they are unable to take part. In some communities, particularly rural ones, families travel long distances to work and making extra trips to school has a large impact on their finances. Parent Councils can play an important role in ensuring that these events do not put additional pressure on families with low incomes.

### Auditing school events

- How often does the school have events that cost money?
- Are there times when several events with cost implications come together (e.g. Christmas fair, panto, Christmas disco)?
- How much notice does the school give for events with cost implications?
- Is there a drop in attendance on days with fundraising events (e.g. non-uniform day)?
- Can children who are not able to pay take part in events (e.g. activities at the summer fair)?
- Could the school run events without charging?
- Is there a set charge for events?
- Do events like non-uniform day and World Book Day put additional pressures on parents from low income families?
- Are there cheaper alternatives that the Parent Councils could source (e.g. PC member to take school photos)?
- Does the Parent Council/ school raise money for a hardship fund for families that are struggling?
- Could events where parents are expected to attend be timed to coincide with drop off or pick up to save extra journeys?
- What happens if a child doesn't bring a donation or wear a costume?

You can choose not to pay, it's an option. But as a parent it's not really, when everyone is getting their Christmas cards and your child's left out.

Parent

# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## Alternatives to fundraising events

- Could the Parent Council apply for grants for funding instead of asking families?
- Could the Parent Council approach local businesses for support?
- Has the school/ Parent Council tried fundraising in the community (packing bags in supermarkets, singing carols in shopping centre)?

## What are you fundraising for?

- Are there any items the Parent Council could purchase for families to help reduce the costs (e.g. providing school ties for all P1s)?
- Do you need to fundraise? Could you borrow the items from other sources?
- Are you fundraising for community resources that low-income families use (e.g. food banks)? How do parents who use these services feel about being asked to give money towards this?

## GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES FROM AROUND SCOTLAND

- 'We limit fundraising events and spread them throughout the year.'
- 'We removed a book fair from parents evening and introduced a book swap event instead.'
- 'We try to keep costs low by fundraising to subsidise costs.'
- Building relationships with local businesses over time: 'We approach local businesses for help and donations' (see appendix 1).
- 'Our school has our one to one meetings with parents at school pick up time to save parents making an extra journey to school.'
- 'Our school has a poster up in reception of what money they'll be asking for and when, so parents can plan out their budget.'

I have a huge round trip from school to work so if I go back to the school for an event my transport costs are huge.

Parent

You also need to buy a lot of stuff because you cannae really go in the same clothes that you wore to the last non-uniform because people notice that... Sometimes it gets to be like a catwalk or something.

Student, S3



# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## SCHOOL TRIPS

School trips can be difficult for families on low incomes to afford. Missing trips means that children miss fun, new experiences and personal development and feel left out. Parent Councils can and do help subsidise school trips or provide funds for children who would otherwise not have been able to go, but families can be embarrassed about asking for financial help.

### Cost of school trips

- How much do trips cost?
- Could the majority of families in your school pay for this easily?
- Is there any support for families with more than one child in the school?
- How many children go on school trips? Are children from low-income families missing out?
- Is there any support available for low income families to ensure that their children can take part? How are these publicised?
- Are there grants available which could help cover the cost of the school trip?

### Costs around the school trip

- Do children need to take additional spending money?
- Do children need additional equipment for the trip (e.g. passport, sleeping bags)
- Could the school source this equipment from elsewhere (e.g. borrow from a neighbouring school)?
- Do children wear uniform on the trip? Does non-uniform create additional pressure on the children?

### Planning school trips

- How much notice does the school give parents regarding school trip costs?
- When do payments need to be made? Does this reflect when parents are paid?
- Does the school let parents know about "hidden costs" (e.g. items needed) up front?

### Do you need a school trip?

- Would an alternative to a trip be more inclusive? (e.g. school fun day)
- Does the trip clearly fit in with the curriculum?
- Are there cheaper alternatives (e.g. theatre in Edinburgh rather than London)?

### How can you help with costs for school trips?

- How much does your school need to keep in a hardship fund to help low income families access trips?
- Does the way the Parent Council fundraises place additional pressures on low income families?
- Can the school and Parent Council find alternative fundraising methods ( e.g. bag packing in supermarket)?

# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES FROM AROUND SCOTLAND

- 'There has been fundraising activities for those who wanted help financing a trip.'
- 'We fundraise to have money to provide coach hire to get the kids to and from their summer day trip. We understand that some parents will find it costly to pay for a trip, particularly if they have more than one child at the school.'
- 'Provide a subsidised trip through grant application.'
- 'Parent Council supplies the school with an "Achievement Fund" (topped up as required) to ensure that no pupils miss out on activities due to lack of funds.'
- 'The head teacher asks the local priest to assist with payment of residential trips.'

I think you get quite annoyed when people like see, if you don't go and then people who did go come back, and that's all they talk about for a week and you didn't go so you don't know what they're talking about.

Student, S6

My children are in a small school and it is really noticeable if they don't go on trips and are basically the only ones left in school.

Parent

# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## EATING AT SCHOOL

Food costs can be significant and receiving free school meals can lessen the financial burden on low income families. However not every family entitled to free meals applies for them and not every child receiving free meals takes them. Parent Councils can help the school to promote free school meals, engaging with parents so that all families entitled to them are able to claim.

### Promoting free school meals (FSM)

- How does the school provide information about free school meals (FSM)?
- When does this information go out to parents?
- Is the information clear and easy to read?
- Does the school offer help to complete the FSM claim form?
- Does the school sign-post parents to money advice services which can help with benefits and accessing FSM?

### Eating in school

- Does your school have a breakfast club?
- Do children who access FSM use this?
- Do most children have a school meal? If not, what do they do for lunch?
- Could the school do more to promote children eating in school?
- Is there a stigma around getting FSM? What has the school done to address this?

Like I can get a free meal and don't mind but if my friends all go out for lunch, and I'm sitting by myself getting a free meal I wouldn't like that.

Student, S3

There's no longer a free carton of juice...it's just tap water...or you have to pay for milk.

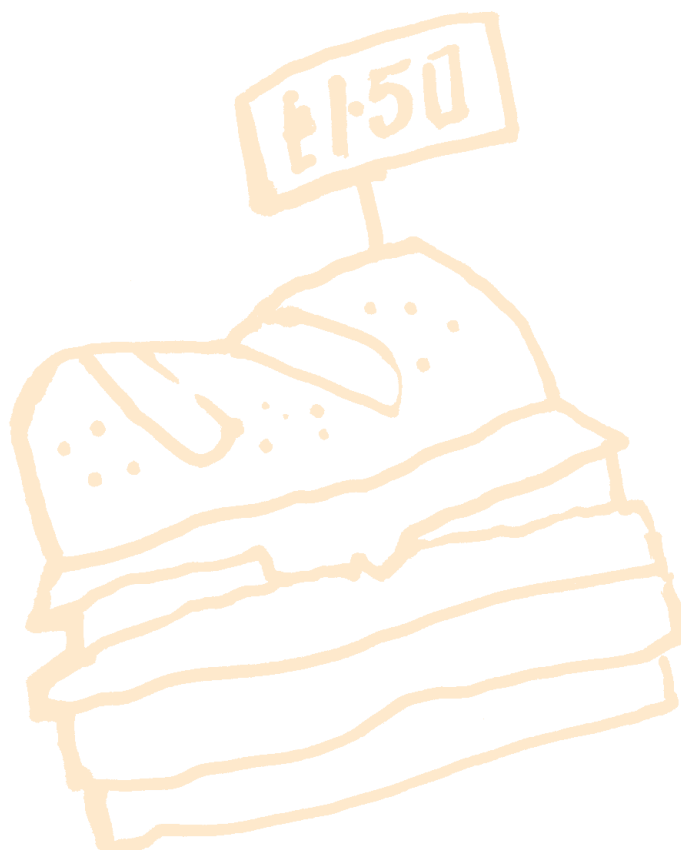
Parent

# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES FROM AROUND SCOTLAND

- Improving promotion of Free School Meals and informing all parents about it at parents' evening.
- Promote that Pupil Equity Funding is connected to FSM so it means more money for the school.
- 'In our smaller communities we direct parents to the Local Authority to apply for free school meals.'
- 'Cashless lunches to reduce stigma have worked in our community.'
- 'School dinner staff are asked to treat FSM sensitively.'
- Consult on menus to show good value for money.



# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## SCHOOL CLUBS

Schools offer a range of lunchtime and after-school clubs, most of which are free or at low cost. These clubs are a valuable resource for children, making new interests and experiences accessible to them. However, costs can still stand in the way of participation.

### School clubs and hidden costs

- Do children need any equipment to take part in clubs (e.g. football boots)?
- Can children who use the school bus take part in after-school clubs?
- Do children need to pay costs for club trips (e.g. attend competitions, away games)?
- Do clubs provide refreshments or do children need to bring their own?

### Supporting school clubs

- How are they promoted in the school - does everyone know how to access them?
- Can other community groups or local businesses support with equipment and funding?

The outfits or uniforms they need are outrageous prices sometimes.

Parent

## GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES FROM AROUND SCOTLAND

- Applying for funding and fundraising to cover transport and equipment costs
- 'Clubs accessed funding to buy football kit so that all children could take part and there was no expectation that children would have their own equipment.'

The cost of extra transport is too much for us so my girl has had to give up gymnastics.

Parent

There's some contest with the dancing and that's the reason I can't go because it cost too much to go to the contest.

Boy, P6

# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## 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, software and printers. Parent Councils can let the school know if these costs are affecting families or if some tasks are not accessible for families.

### What is expected of home learning?

- What equipment do children need for home learning and does the school know the families who need support with this?
- Does the school set craft projects for homework? Does this impact on low income families and families where parents are working long hours?
- How often does the school set craft homework? Can this be spaced out in the school term so families with more than one child do not have several craft projects at once?
- What is the policy for incomplete homework?

### Supporting home learning

- Can children access equipment needed for homework through school? e.g. devices are made available, children are able to use art equipment in classroom during lunchtimes or after school.
- Does the school provide support with homework (homework clubs etc)?
- Can all children access homework clubs or supported study?

There's just an assumption that children have everything. You might have a computer but not a printer....or a printer but not broadband.

Parent



# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES FROM AROUND SCOTLAND

- 'Schools are looking at running homework clubs within the local area, in partnership with housing associations. This means that children can get support with their learning, access to the right equipment and don't need to walk home from school late in the evening.'
- 'Our school always provides a paper back up to homework. Online submission is optional.'

My teacher said the other day, if youse don't finish this you'll have to do it for homework but I don't have the Office stuff that you need to use like spreadsheets and that because I've no paid for it and you need to pay for it, it's extra and I was like I don't have it, say if I don't finish this how will I do it and she was like "I don't know, you'll find a way somehow".

Student, S5

# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## ATTITUDES TO POVERTY

Many teachers, children and parents are aware of poverty and try to be sensitive to the challenges that low income families face. However, in the media and wider society people are increasingly likely to think that poverty is the fault of the individual. In some more affluent areas poverty can be hidden. Parent Councils can help teachers develop a better understanding of poverty and its impact on families, helping to build awareness on the unaffordability of school for many parents. It is important that parents feel that they can speak to Parent Councils about issues around cost without being worried that they will be judged.

### Understanding the experiences of low income families

- Do members of your Parent Council help the school understand the experiences of low income families (e.g. the pressure families are under to get their children the "right" trainers)?
- How much do you know about parents' experiences and opinions on these issues?
- Can your Parent Council do more to engage with families around costs (eg. consultations around changes to school uniform, build links with local community groups)?
- Does your Parent Council provide support so parents on low incomes can take part in meetings (e.g. thinking about childcare, travel costs and timings of meetings)?
- How diverse is your parent council - are families on low incomes represented within the group?

### Talking about poverty

- Who can children and parents speak to about financial issues in the school?
- In general, how are parents told about financial supports available to them?
- Is there a stigma around asking for financial help? Can the Parent Council do anything to address this?
- Do children have the opportunity to talk about issues surrounding poverty and how it affects them in a safe place? Could the school do more to provide these opportunities?

Poverty is more hidden in our area...there should be some kind of way of letting people know that there are issues.

Parent

# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## APPENDIX 1

### Template letter to local businesses (with thanks to Merrylee Primary Parents Association)

[School address]  
[Date]

Dear local business owner,

## REQUEST FOR A RAFFLE PRIZE

I am writing to you on behalf of Merrylee Parents Association, the fundraising body at Merrylee Primary School. We are currently in the process of organising a Family Fun Night, which will take place on the evening of Friday 27th February in the Couper Institute. The night will consist of games with music entertainment for all families and friends of our school to join in. This is our 3rd year holding this event, with it being one of our main fundraising nights in the school calendar as previous years have been extremely successful and have sold out.

Our focus this year is to provide the school with a much-needed new piano. This will be of great benefit to the children during their music lessons, it will help them to learn new techniques and it will also enhance our school shows throughout the year.

We are looking for the support of local businesses within our community. During our fundraising evening we will be holding a raffle draw and ask if you would like to donate a suitable prize. In previous years our raffle draw has been a highlight, which really boost our funds on the evening. We would be able to show our appreciation by displaying promotional leaflets for your business on the night and also using our school community Facebook page to highlight your business and support.

Donations can be given into our school at the above address or by contacting our secretary XXXXX, on (phone number) or (email address).

Many thanks in advance for taking the time to consider our request and best wishes from Merrylee Primary.

On behalf of Merrylee PA

# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## APPENDIX 2 Funding Sources

The **Asda foundation** funds significant local community projects and top-up funding grants. Apply by getting in touch with your local store.

**Aviva Community Fund** offers support and funding to causes that make a real difference where you live.

B&M are keen to engage with their local communities. Email [giving@bmstores.co.uk](mailto:giving@bmstores.co.uk) for more information.

**B&Q stores** donate unsellable materials and products to their local community.

### **Creative Scotland**

Supporting organisations and individuals to develop artistic skills, create a piece of work and encourage people to get involved in creative activities.

### **Esmée Fairbairn Foundation**

Support the social, emotional and learning needs of young people aged 0-25 at greater risk of being left behind educationally. The Foundation funds work that challenges the public policies and practices that reinforce educational inequality.

**Historic Scotland** offer free education visits to their sites around Scotland.

Both **Loch Lomond and Trossachs** and **Cairngorms National Parks** provide education travel grants for 75% of travel costs.

**National Lottery Awards for all Scotland** provides funding for a range of projects which involve bringing local people together, helping people learn, improving local spaces and getting people more active.

**NFU Mutual** Community Giving Fund supports community initiatives and charitable events.

All **Sainsbury's** stores have a local charity they support throughout the year. They also have a small budget for making donations of raffle prizes or vouchers and can sometimes help with events in store such as bag packing.

**SSE** set up local and regional funds for each new onshore wind farm they build.

Each **Tesco** UK store holds a community donation budget to help support with requests from their community for local fundraising events. If you would like to be considered for a donation please write to the Community Champion at your nearest store.

**Warburton's** bakery sites can provide support to local communities through the donation of products which can support local community activities.

### **Youth Bank**

Youth Banks are run by and for young people, creating projects for the benefit of the local community.

The **Youthlink Scotland** funding directory has lots more ideas that could be helpful in your area.

### **Young Scot**

Their newsletter gives regular updates of funding opportunities, free events and activities.

# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## SURVEY FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

Questions contained in this survey can help you to find out parents' and carers' opinions on:

- What costs money at school and what the biggest costs are for them
- Which costs could cause problems for families on low incomes
- Awareness of support available from the school and confidence in accessing it

A survey is unlikely to reach every parent and carer in the school. Various barriers can exist related to time, literacy, language and interest in the subject. However, it may be suitable for some and will ideally be used as one of a range of ways to consult with parents/carers.

### SAMPLE INTRODUCTION

*"[Name of school] wants to make sure that all children are able to make the most of the school day and that no child misses out on anything. Your answers to this survey will help us check whether school costs are causing any concerns for our families and children and whether there is anything that we can do to help out.*

*Your voice is really important and we want to hear from as many parents and carers as possible. We promise to listen to what's been said and take action where it's needed.*

*For more information, please contact [name and details]"*

**To complete the survey online, you can create your own copy by going to <https://bit.ly/2Nv8BJd> and click on 'duplicate this form and start using it as your own'. You will need your Glow login details.**

**However, consider access to computers, internet access and IT literacy if asking parents and carers to complete online.**