**Cathkin High School**



**Cost of the School Day Policy**

**Introduction**

Schools and local authorities are sensitive to families facing socio-economic challenges. Recent Scottish Government policy and investment has focused on closing the poverty related attainment gap between children from areas considered to be of high disadvantage and areas of low disadvantage in order to reduce current inequalities in educational outcomes. Integral to this agenda must be an understanding of how education and school structures, policies and practices affect children and young people from low-income households and where difficulties and financial barriers to participation exist throughout the school day. Understanding more about this from the perspectives of learners and their families can support schools to poverty-proof their policies and practices so that conditions are right for all children and young people to learn and to achieve.

For further information on Child Poverty Action Group please look up:

<http://www.cpag.org.uk/costoftheschoolday>

**Our Vision** - **C**ommunity, **L**earning, **E**xcellence, **A**mbition, **R**espect

As a school community, we will work together to develop our children and young people as successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. We will strive to ensure all of our children and young people are provided with opportunities to fully participate in their learning and that poverty does not present a barrier. In Cathkin High School we will employ a range of practical measures which can help to minimise costs, reduce stigma and, where possible, our learners have equal access to opportunities at school.

We will ensure our families feel supported and know how to seek help. We will ensure that we raise awareness with our staff; so that they understand the impact of poverty on the school day.

**Rationale**

In Cathkin High School we strive to ensure that every learner should have equal opportunities to a variety of educational experiences. To achieve this, we may provide children with additional resources and support strategies.

**Aims**

We aim to:

1. Respect the dignity of our families whilst ensuring that our learners do not miss out on opportunities and experiences because of financial barriers.

2. Ensure all learners have access to meaningful learning experiences, which enable them to develop an understanding of the different types of poverty and their impact.

3. Signpost our learners and their families to access supports and financial advice.

4. Offer an ongoing commitment to equity and participation by listening to and acting upon what our learners and parents / carers say in order to correctly identify the range of costs involved in the school day from different perspectives and where possible, attempt to minimise these pressures.

5. Support the Government’s vision for Scotland’s society and economy to be stronger with families feeling empowered.

**Is there poverty?**

More than one in five (210,000) children across Scotland are officially recognised as living in poverty. In Glasgow, it is estimated that one in three (over 36,000) children are 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. (Education Scotland)

**SAC and PEF**

SAC and PEF funding is used to support learners in SIMD 1 and 2. Funding decisions are shared with the Parent Council.

**Our Commitment**

**Learning, Teaching and Curriculum**

Our children and young people do not need to pay for core learning activities. Whilst learners may prefer to use their own stationery and equipment, faculties can provide these resources if required. There are lunchtime school clubs offering access to a range of free activities including research time on our ICT resources to ensure that all learners can complete homework/ presentation tasks.

In order to address the effects of poverty on basic literacy skills, we have developed a BGE Literacy Intervention Framework. This provides a robust framework for early identification of weak literacy skills and targeted interventions for improvements.

**Uniform**

Essential items consist of a blazer, white shirt, black trousers or skirt and black footwear. Parents / carers can purchase uniform from any local shop/ supermarket. Blazers can be purchased from our uniform supplier Scotcrest Uniforms. We encourage parents / carers to apply for all appropriate benefits. We direct parents to South Lanarkshire’s website for further details on how to apply for clothing grants. School ties are presented free of charge to all P7s during their primary transition and also to S4 pupils on transitioning to senior phase.

**Lunches**

We encourage and direct parents to South Lanarkshire’s website to apply for free school meals. Our canteen runs a cashless system which reduces the stigma for learners in receipt of the free school meal entitlement.

**Friendships**

We ensure that if any of our children and young people are experiencing poverty-related bullying, they can report this in confidence to their Pupil Support teacher or another trusted member of staff.

**School clubs and teams**

We have a wide range of afterschool and lunchtime clubs. The football teams, an optional afterschool activity, charge a fee to cover referee and transport costs. However other clubs run by school staff have no ongoing charges.

**Outings, trips and events**

We will strive to ensure that all of our learners are provided with opportunities to experience a diverse range of outings, events and educational trips whilst ensuring that the financial pressure of these do not exclude learners from low-income homes. The Faculties, the S6 Prom Committee and the Activities Committee are mindful when arranging events and trips that costs be kept to a minimum and families are given forewarning and extended periods of time to pay.

The school operates a cashless system of paying for outings, events and educational trips through ParentPay which reduces the stigma with some methods of payment and facilitates families being able to spread the cost of events over an extended period. Where a trip is a compulsory part of an SQA course children, in receipt of FME and who are in deciles 1 and 2, are not required to pay.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

We understand that the Cost of the School Day is an area that requires constant vigilance and cannot be ‘fixed’ by any one action. Our SMT will monitor the progress of the Cost of the School Day by:

• discussions with Parent and Pupil Councils

• monitoring feedback from monthly House meetings

**Equal Opportunities**

Cathkin High School aims to provide equal opportunities for all pupils irrespective of ability, gender and cultural background. We strive to remove barriers, thus enabling our children and young people to maximise their attainment and achievement.

Cost of the School Day Policy, November 2020.

Written in consultation with our staff, parents and pupils.