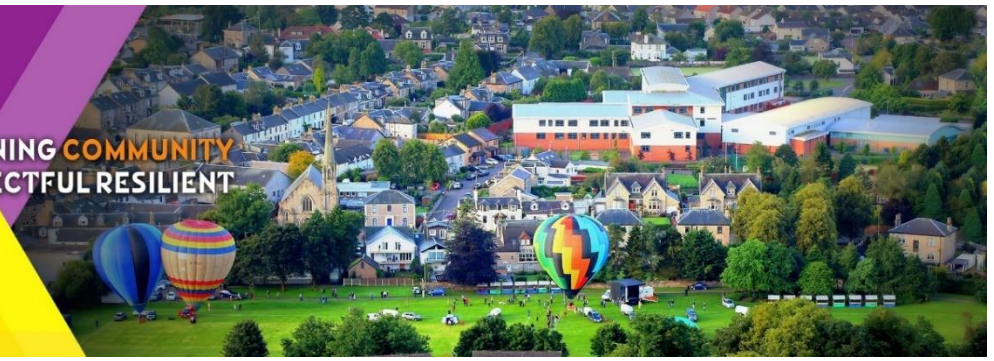




STRATHAVEN LEARNING COMMUNITY  
RESPONSIBLE RESPECTFUL RESILIENT



# Strathaven Academy

Cost of the School Day

Policy



School trips  
Home learning  
Eating at school  
Friendships at school  
Understanding poverty  
Travelling to school  
Learning at school  
Getting dressed  
School clubs  
Fun events



RESPONSIBLE RESPECTFUL RESILIENT  
STRATHAVEN LEARNING COMMUNITY  
OPERATION: GLASGOWTON GLASSFORD WINDMILL FARM, SNAPEFORD WESTER DAMPIER, STRATHAVEN ACADEMY

## **Background Information and Context**

Cost of the School Day (CoSD) is a Scottish initiative, which aims to raise awareness within learning communities of the financial implications and burdens education can create. At Strathaven Academy, we realise insufficient household and/or disposable income can mean that young people simply do not have the resources needed for school and often cannot easily afford to take part in the wide range of our school activities. Consequently, some pupils are at risk of missing out and therefore may feel different, excluded and unhappy.

Relative poverty is defined as:

*“the condition in which people lack the minimum amount of income needed in order to maintain the average standard of living in the society in which they live”.*

(<https://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-relative-poverty-definition-causes-examples.html>)

We know that people can move in and out of poverty throughout their lifespan. There are transient, recurrent and persistent states of poverty depending on individual and family circumstances. In some more affluent areas, poverty can be hidden.

Whilst schools alone cannot eradicate the issue, Strathaven Academy recognises that schools have a responsibility to help learners overcome any barrier to learning, including poverty. We will continue to work together with our wider community to alleviate some of the poverty related issues faced by our pupils and parents/carers. This will enable us to provide support to allow all Strathaven Academy pupils to thrive.

As part of our school plan to ensure equitable access to education, parents/carers can now request support with funding (e.g. for clothing, essential school materials, etc.). Any staff member involved in the request process will operate with the highest possible discretion and will be respectful of families' personal circumstances. Please see our school website for the form (<http://strathaven.s-lanark.sch.uk/cost-of-the-school-day/>) or this can be collected from the school office.

Please note the support that we may be able to provide will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

Overall, our aims are to:

1. Reduce the financial burden on families associated with school.
2. Raise awareness amongst pupils, parents/carers, staff and other agencies of the supports we offer to our families, whilst also operating with discretion and respecting confidentiality when assistance is requested.
3. Improve partnership working amongst stakeholders to ensure equitable access to education for our pupils.

This policy is designed to outline action points for reducing costs and highlight the supports we offer in school. If the school is not aware of issues, then the pupil experience may be affected. As a school, we would like the opportunity to support where possible. Strathaven Academy encourages all of our pupils and parents/carers who find themselves in a situation, at any point in their child's school career where they cannot financially support their child for whatever reason, to contact their child's Pupil Support teacher or complete our request for financial assistance form. We hope this will lead to the school being able to offer the appropriate support/resource provision to allow pupils to receive as full and as rounded, a school experience as possible.



Where possible, at Strathaven Academy we endeavour to match these key recommendations from the Poverty Action Groups (<https://cpag.org.uk/>):

- School staff and pupils should hold no assumptions about financial situations.
- Spreading out school events to avoid hotspots leading to increasing financial pressures.
- Running fund-raising activities that do not always ask families to contribute.
- Lending resources without trouble.
- Offering/ providing support to access IT.
- Having consistent expectations and practice between staff members on uniform, resources etc.
- Rewards and merits unaffected by issues relating to finances at home.
- Anti-bullying alert to income-based bullying or stigma.
- Greater poverty awareness amongst our own school community.
- Making sure families/students are aware of their financial entitlements (e.g. clothing grants, free meals, EMA).
- Staff discretion and empathy in relation to equity issues.
- Covering costs/subsidising and supporting discounts where possible.
- Systems in place where pupils/parents/carers do not feel embarrassed asking for help.

In consultation with our Parent Council, we will continue to use these key 'benchmarks' to look at ways in which we can further enhance our support to families who may be finding the various costs of a child's school experience a challenge. The Child Poverty Action Group's support materials provided us with a basis for that discussion.

In general, school costs can be broken down into 10 key categories:

1. Getting dressed
2. Traveling to school
3. Learning at school
4. Friendships at school
5. School trips
6. Eating at school
7. Fun events
8. School clubs
9. Home learning
10. Understanding attitudes towards poverty

Whilst the following information outlines our general school policy, we realise individual circumstances vary greatly and therefore exceptions may apply. Therefore, if you are in any doubt please contact your child's Pupil Support teacher for clarification on individual issues.



## **1. Getting dressed**

Parents on certain benefits can access a clothing grant to help with school uniform costs. Currently, the South Lanarkshire Grant is £150. Information about entitlement to clothing grants and how to apply is available on the South Lanarkshire Council website:

[www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/info/200186/](http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/info/200186/). Alternatively, you can speak to your child's Pupil Support teacher.

We have also created a clothing recycling point within the school. Both current and former pupils are asked to donate items of uniform, which they themselves can no longer use but are still in wearable condition. This creates for a more sustainable environment as well as allowing pupils access to uniform should they require any items.

Any items of clothing not collected from lost property will be transferred to our uniform recycling bank on the last day of each term.

Whilst our behaviour policy and merit/de-merits system do potentially offer punitive measures for pupils not adhering to our uniform policy, SLT will work with relevant staff on this to ensure our young people are dealt with fairly.

We also provide students with hygiene products and toiletries if required.

Furthermore, as with all SLC establishments, free female sanitary products are available. These can be located in the girls' toilets and from Pupils Support staff.

## **2. Travelling to school**

Transport costs are significant for low-income families and can affect children and young people's attendance and participation at school. We are aware that 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 journeys to school.

As a school, we follow SLC's policy on the provision of free transport. Parents of pupils who are placing requests, and therefore live out with the school catchment area are required to meet travel costs for their child.

On 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022, the Scottish Government introduced the 'Free Bus Travel Scheme'. This scheme allows all young people aged between 5-21 to apply for a card which entitles them to free bus travel throughout Scotland. Pupils can apply for their card by collecting a form from the school office or alternatively, you can access the Transport Scotland website for more information -

<https://www.transport.gov.scot/concessionary-travel/young-persons-free-bus-travel-scheme/#overview>

## **3. Learning at school**

We recognise that the cost of materials for different subjects can soon add up for families.

In session 2022-23 we launched our 'Be Ready to Thrive' station. This is a station where pupils can collect material they require to help them thrive, within and out with school. All material is available to pupils in S1-S6 should they be unable to provide their





We also run a free breakfast club for pupils each week from 8.15am-8.50am. Pupils are encouraged to attend so that as a school we offer them the opportunity to eat a nutritious breakfast and enjoy the social aspect of food. Staff also attend; however, staff pay so pupils do not have to. Having staff attend also reduces stigma for pupils and provides further opportunity to build positive relationships.

## **6. Fun events**

Whilst our pupils do have to pay for some fun events and social events, some of these can be subsidised by the PTA or the school to reduce the cost for our young people and their families.

Events are carefully planned and spread out wherever possible across a school year to reduce the financial burden. Parent Pay also gives families the opportunity to pay in instalments over a period of time.

We limit non-uniform days each year and at times, replace them with themed events such as “odd socks” day. Payment for this is suggested and not compulsory. We ask that if pupils are able to, they make a donation. Money is collected by registration teachers and is done so discretely to avoid embarrassing any pupils.

## **7. Home learning**

At Strathaven Academy, many of our young people have access to ICT resources however, we are aware that this is not the case for all pupils.

Homework tasks are issued via the Google Classroom and Show My Homework. Class teachers also go over the instructions in class and paper copies can be issued as and when required.

In session 2023-24 we will launch our Chromebook Lending Scheme. This will provide pupils who do not have access to ICT at home, the opportunity to rent a Chromebook for an evening. We have a limited number of Chromebooks available for lending and these will be provided to pupils after completion and the consideration of a booking form which can be collected from the Thrive room.

## **8. Understanding attitudes towards poverty**

Parental views are taken into account and we aim to work in partnership to alleviate any issues for pupils. The Parent Council have been consulted in the development of this policy and their suggestions integrated into our final report.

Parents/carers are signposted towards help and support through a variety of forums:

- Letters
- School website
- School Twitter
- School App
- Information at reception
- Telephone consultations with Pupil Support, PTs Equity and SLT.
- Meetings with Pupil Support, PTs Equity and SLT.



All school staff will receive CPD on child poverty and CoSD during Session 2023-24.

Parents/carers, pupils and staff have also completed a CoSD survey. From this, we have been able to collate responses, garner views and plan for our next steps.

All pupils and parents/carers are encouraged to speak to a trusted member of staff or complete our request for support form if they feel they are at a disadvantage from financial issues. Staff then discretely work to resolve issues and barriers to learning.

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