



Strathaven Academy

Cost of the School Day

Policy



Getting Dressed

Travelling

Learning

Friendships

School Excursions

Eating

Fun Events

School Clubs

Learning at Home

Attitudes to Poverty



Background Information and Context

Cost of the School Day (CoSD) is a national 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.



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 when required.
- 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 line with SLC Guidelines, our policy is split into 10 key categories:

1. Getting dressed
2. Travelling
3. Learning
4. Friendships
5. School Excursions
6. Eating
7. Fun Events
8. School Clubs
9. Learning at Home
10. Attitudes to 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/. Alternatively, you can speak to your child's Pupil Support teacher.

We have a clothing recycling point within the school and we work in partnership with Climate Action Strathaven where families can collect clothing free of charge. 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.

We take pride in our young people being dressed appropriately for school, however appreciate that having the correct clothing may not always be possible. Principal Teacher of Equity and Pupil Support will work with young people to ensure that they have appropriate clothing for school.

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

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

2. Travelling

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

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

On 31st 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. We encourage and support all pupils to apply for their card by collecting a form from the school office or alternatively, parents/ carers and young people 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

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 own materials for any reason. The station contains items such as; stationary, folders, flashcards, reusable water bottles, toiletries etc.



Pupils are not asked to provide core items such as jotters and folders. Strathaven Academy's school library offers many helpful learning aids such as books, leaflets and Past Papers. Pupils should go through the normal library procedures to access these.

Pupils can also access ICT equipment such as computers and Chromebooks should they require these. Items can be accessed before school, during interval and lunchtime and after school.

4. Friendships

In PSE, poverty and the surrounding issues will be discussed as part of our curriculum and as a school, we participate in Challenge Poverty Week. This will raise awareness and understanding of the issue between pupils and therefore reduce stigma.

Pupils in receipt of Free School Meals have the facility to pre-order their lunch, meaning that they are able to collect it and then remain with their friendship groups should their friends be leaving the school premises at lunchtimes.

As part of the school's anti-bullying policy, stigma (including poverty-related stigma) is discussed. For information on how to report bullying incidents or to read the school's stance on any bullying-related issues, please refer to our anti-bullying policy available on the school website (<http://strathaven.s-lanark.sch.uk/school-policies-2/>). If you are aware of any examples where your child expresses concern over any form of bullying they are experiencing with regard to financial issues, we would ask that this is communicated to us at the earliest opportunity to allow us to have restorative conversations with all involved and offer support and re-assurance to any pupil affected.

5. School Excursions

School trips are carefully planned throughout the year and where possible, we aim to give enough notice for families to ensure there is the option to 'pay up' for school trips via Parent Pay. Any school trip that takes place during the school day and is linked to the curriculum will not have any charge.

As a school, we value the opportunity to enhance the learning experiences for our young people through residential and abroad trips. We will look to ways that we can support our young people and explore external funding whenever possible to create a stigma free environment.

At Strathaven Academy, we will always 'shop around' before booking any school excursions to ensure we get good value for money.

Trips during the school day will normally involve children wearing their Strathaven Academy school uniform.

6. Eating

Food costs can be significant and receiving Free School Meals (FSM) can lessen the financial burden on low-income families. If you are in receipt of Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Reduction from South Lanarkshire Council (SLC) and you have a child who attends a school in South Lanarkshire, there is no need for you to apply online. SLC will use the information they hold to automatically award free school meals to eligible families. If you



live out with South Lanarkshire, you will need to apply for FME, this application is available on the SLC website (www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/info/200186/).

At Strathaven Academy, Principal Teachers (PT) of Equity monitor FSM uptake each year. PT of Equity work in partnership with Pupil Support and Year Heads to make families who are entitled to FSM aware of this and work with the pupils to encourage them to take up this entitlement.

Pupils in receipt of FSM simply use their Young Scot cards to pay for food. The money is pre-loaded onto the card each day. Therefore, it is not known to other pupils that they are getting a free school meal.

Our school canteen also hosts themed days and promotional events to encourage more pupils to purchase food from school rather than local amenities. At Strathaven Academy, many of our young people not in receipt of FSM buy food from the school canteen as do a number of staff. Therefore, stigma is reduced for those who receive FSM.

At Strathaven Academy and in line with SLC policy, any vulnerable pupil who arrives late for breakfast can access fruit from the school canteen.

At the end of the lunch service each day, our canteen staff put any left-over food in our communal fridge. This food is available to all pupils and staff and can be collected discretely.

7. 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. No 'fun event' in school will cost a family more than £5.

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 will not be collected from individuals, instead 'put it in the bucket' type collections / anonymous donations will be encouraged.

8. School Clubs

All wider-curriculum clubs at Strathaven Academy are free of charge. Our wider-curricular programme provides all learners with the opportunity to develop social, physical and emotional wellbeing as well as developing new skills. Many of our wider-curricular clubs are offered during lunch time to ensure that all young people have the opportunity to be involved in a variety of clubs.

To access our wider-curriculum programme please use the following link –

<http://strathaven.s-lanark.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Wider-Curriculum-2023-24.pdf>



9. Learning at Home

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 Satchel One. Class teachers go over the instructions in class and paper copies will also be available.

As a school, we have a subscription for Achieve, this is an excellent resource which can help support all pupils for a number of National and Higher courses. Achieve can be accessed via Glow and instructions on how to sign up are available on year group Google Classrooms. Alternatively, pupils can contact their year head to obtain the access code.

In session 2023-24 we launched our Chromebook Lending Scheme. This provides 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 found on the Glow Tile – Chrome from Home or by speaking to Miss Harvey.

10. Attitudes to 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 X
- School App
- Information at reception
- Telephone consultations with Pupil Support, PT Equity and Year Head.
- Meetings with Pupil Support, PTs Equity and SLT.

All school staff will receive CPD on child poverty and CoSD periodically.

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.

