



Cost of the School Day Position Statement

Lanark Primary School & ELC, South Lanarkshire Council



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

Uniform

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

Travel

The majority of our children travel to school on foot or by car. Transport is provided for a few by the Local Authority. This means that almost all children can attend any afterschool activities we provide.

Learning

Children at Lanark Primary School & ELC do not need to pay for any core learning activity. Pens and pencils are provided and young people do not need to bring their own equipment although we are aware that many children like to do this. We currently have a procedure for young people to borrow equipment if they need it for homework (e.g. a calculator or craft equipment/ access to ICT during lunchtimes/afterschool). We also provide a free Homework Club in most terms to support any homework needs.

Friendships

We ensure that any pupil experiencing poverty-related bullying has a way of reporting this in confidence. We teach young people about poverty related issues as part of our Health and Wellbeing and LPS Values work. We have already gathered the views of our families on the Cost of the School Day and will look to involve them in decision making around this.

School Trips

Currently our trips are planned each year in relation to learning opportunities and relevant points of interest. LPS Parent Council subsidises £4 per head in the school for trips and donates £100 towards trips in the ELC. This means that ALL day school trips were free of charge in 2018-19. We try to reduce the cost of activities such as the annual pantomime by subsidising the cost of the ticket alongside the Parent Council. We will continue to endeavour to provide free school trips in 2019-20.

This year, we have also funded the residential trip for 10% of our pupils.

Eating at school

Last school year we had 20.7% of pupils who were in receipt of Free School Meals. We are aware that there may be a stigma associated with a free lunch and we try to reduce this by never discussing who has a free school meal, instead we always inform the children that their parents have prepaid to avoid any unnecessary anxiety around this. We estimate that approximately 100% of pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals take up their entitlement. Families who are receiving qualifying benefits, will automatically receive Free School Meals.

We currently provide a free Breakfast Club and will soon implement a 'Toast to Go' service for those children who cannot get to school in time for Breakfast Club. This will also be free.

Fun Events

Lanark Primary School & ELC recognise that events planned for enjoyment can actually put added pressure on to families. We intend to look carefully at attendance and participation in these events in order to see if there are any poverty-related patterns that require action. When young people cannot afford to take part in any activity we ensure they can still experience it by ensuring families know that those experiencing financial difficulties can speak confidentially to the school and there will be an arrangement in place to support them and their children discretely- we would never exclude a child from a 'fun activity' due to lack of payment.. We currently have a 'Hardship Fund' running in the school, where parents/carers can apply for additional support for costs. We currently fund raise through the Parent Council by carrying out discos, shows, Christmas Fayres, sponsored events etc. but understand that not all families are able to contribute. We also participate in bag packing where available and regularly seek grants and external funding to alleviate the pressure of additional costs on families.

School Clubs

At Lanark Primary & ELC we have an extensive range of clubs on offer. We do not charge for pupils to take part. Some clubs may require specific equipment e.g. badminton racquet, football boots, and we do what we can to ensure the necessary equipment is available for all children in the school but may ask for voluntary donations towards this.

We are very clear that the Cost of the School Day is an area that requires constant vigilance and will not be 'fixed' by any one action. In our Improvement Plan for 2019/20 we will be focusing on

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

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