



Cost of the School Day Position Statement – February 2022 High Mill Primary, South Lanarkshire Council



At High Mill Primary we recognise the need to reduce the Cost of the School Day for all our pupils. We are committed to combating disadvantage and inequity within our school community. We examine the school day through the following headings: Uniform, Travel, Learning, Friendship, School trips, Eating, Fun, Clubs, Period Poverty and Home learning.

Uniform

Our current uniform consists of white shirt and tie, black jumper/cardigan and black/grey trousers/skirt with black school shoes. Children can wear white polo shirts to school on gym days. If they wish, families can purchase branded uniforms from 'ALJ Workwear' in Lanark and we also sell school ties. **We do not insist on badged jumpers/polo shirts** and parents are welcome to consider other options available in supermarkets and other clothing retailers.

We have a uniform Swap Shop with a range of pre-loved items which is put outside the main entrance of the school and allows families to access these freely on a daily basis. This also has some winter clothing items and is used for Halloween and Christmas to promote pre-loved costumes. We also have developed close links with Kit for Kids charity and Universal Connections and together we can provide support for families with uniform and clothing needs.

Travel

Due to the locality of our school, transportation is not a significant cost barrier. Whilst not directly a financial implication, we are aware that due to care arrangements, some children may be unable to attend after school clubs, so we also offer opportunities at other times within the school day, e.g., lunchtime. This alleviates the pressure of collecting children after 4pm. This offers equity of opportunity.

Learning

Children at High Mill Primary do not need to pay for any core learning activity. All stationery is provided, and young people do not need to bring their own equipment to school as all items can be supplied. Many of our families also benefited from Chromebooks and Wi-fi dongles provided by the Scottish Government during COVID19 school closures, families continue to benefit from these devices. We are committed to ensuring our children have access to a range of learning opportunities so we pay for swimming lessons and can also provide support for children who wish to undertake instrumental music instruction.

Friendships

We ensure that any pupil experiencing poverty-related bullying has a way of reporting this in confidence through "Listen to me" boxes. We teach young people about poverty related issues including Financial Education, Health and Wellbeing and Global Citizenship. We intend to gather the views of our young people and families on the Cost of the School Day and have involved them in decision making around this and our Participatory Budget spend.

Educational Excursions

Currently our excursions are planned based on learning opportunities and areas of interest. The majority of our outings do have a cost while others are subsidised. We try to reduce the cost by using our school funds, school/class fundraising and with support from our Parent Council. We aim to give families as much notice as possible of costs involved. We have a price cap on outings. Outdoor residential excursions can be paid in instalments spread out over a longer period. We offer support to families that may be experiencing difficulties, we do this discreetly. Our children have the opportunity to attend various events throughout the school year which are fully funded by the school e.g., Sportshall Athletics, Football Tournaments, Netball Festivals, Cross Country, Triathlon event, Dance Festival and Transition Activities. The cost for these activities is met by the school.

Eating at school

This year we have 45.65 % of pupils 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 meal. Using Parent Pay for parents to pay for lunches online removes any stigma with children paying by cash, therefore, free school meal children cannot be identified by their peers. Approximately 60% of all pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals take up their entitlement. Some families who may be entitled to Free School Meals may not currently apply due to P1-5 children already receiving free school meals. We have a free breakfast club that 16% of our children currently attend.

Fun Events

High Mill Primary recognises that events planned for enjoyment can put added pressure on to families. We look carefully at attendance and participation in these events to see if there are any poverty-related patterns that require action. When young people cannot afford to take part in any activity, arrangements are put in place to support them discreetly. This ensures every child can participate. Our families know that those experiencing financial difficulties can speak confidentially to the school and that we will work co-operatively to ensure there is no financial exclusion. We currently fund raise by sponsored activities, coffee mornings, dress down days, school fayres and understand that not all families are able to contribute so we deal with this in a discreet way. To participate in events, we simply suggest voluntary donations are welcome and give no fixed amount. In planning our annual calendar, we take account of financial pressure points e.g., children can wear Christmas jumpers or festive accessories any day in December with no cost/donation attached. We are also mindful of keeping the number of themed days manageable e.g., by choosing between World Book Day and Scottish Book Week.

School Clubs

At High Mill Primary when running any extra-curricular clubs, we do not charge anyone to take part. Some clubs may require specific equipment and we always ensure the necessary equipment is available for all children in the school to allow them to take part.

Home Learning

We try to reduce the cost of learning at home as much as possible by providing all materials when required. We ensure that any homework activity can be completed by *all* pupils regardless of their family circumstances.

Period Poverty

Within the school, there are sanitary products in the toilets for pupils to access independently if required to tackle period poverty. Free products are given out annually to all senior girls during the RSHP lessons and if/when required. Through our school newsletters, we have communicated with families that there are free products in school for any adults to access.

Sustainability

We are committed to reducing the Cost of the School Day. We continuously monitor and review our approaches. We are vigilant and understand that financial hardship will not be 'fixed' by any one action. In our Improvement Plan for 2021/22 we will be focusing on

- Maintaining and improving our 'Uniform Swap Shop'
- Continuing to ensure that we as a school are constantly alert to the Cost of the School Day when planning events.
- Consider other events and methods of fund raising such as grants, bag packing.
- Further promote the financial supports available through a range of communication channels.