



## Cost of the School Day Position Statement – October 2021

### Bothwell Primary School

### South Lanarkshire Council

'Tackling cost barriers may not always cost money but may simply mean doing things differently' (Cost of the School Day Toolkit, 2021).

At Bothwell Primary School we recognise the need to reduce the Cost of the School Day for all of 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.

We have begun to gather the views of our staff and Parent Council on the Cost of the School Day with a view to involving them in decision-making around this.

#### Uniform

Our current uniform is grey trousers and skirts, grey jumpers/cardigans, blue shirts and our school tie or blue jogging trousers, blue sweatshirts and yellow polo shirts. Families can purchase branded uniform items from the school or from our suppliers MIYO Apparel in Motherwell. We do not insist on badged sweatshirts/polo shirts and encourage parents to look at more affordable options in supermarkets and other clothing retailers. We intend to update our practice by having a uniform bank of previously owned items, which can be accessed at any time, once restrictions are lifted and we are allowed to do so. We will ensure that the uniform bank will also be available at events such as parent consultations. We aim to encourage families can feel free to pick up items required from the clothing bank at any time.

#### Travel

Some of our children travel to school by school bus, but the majority of our children travel to school on foot or by car. School transport is provided by the Local Authority but there are also many pupils who are collected by after school care businesses. We are aware that this could mean some children are not able to attend after school clubs. We therefore ensure that we have lunchtime activities, as well as after school clubs, to alleviate the pressure of children being collected from clubs at 3.45pm.

#### Learning

Children at Bothwell Primary School 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 learners to borrow equipment if they need it for homework (e.g. a calculator or craft equipment). We also allow access to our computers for children who may have difficulty accessing the internet at home. Our aim is to ensure that all learners can complete activities no matter their family circumstances. We aim to provide a free Homework Club to support any homework needs, during lunchtime.

## **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 through our curriculum within such areas as Financial Education, Health and Wellbeing and Global Citizenship work, in addition to our BPS SMARTER Values.

## **School Trips**

Normally, our trips are planned each year in relation to learning opportunities and relevant points of interest. Many of our outings do have a cost involved while others do not. We try to reduce the cost of outings through the valuable support of our Parent Council and by using school funds. We also aim to give families as much notice as possible if there is a cost involved. Such outings as our outdoor residential experience can be paid in instalments over a longer period of time. We often support families who have more than one child attending any outing or whom we know may be experiencing difficulties. Currently, in light of Covid, school trips are not taking place. We hope for this to change in the coming months as restrictions continue to ease.

## **Eating at school**

Last year, 10% of pupils were in receipt of Free School Meals. This information is kept confidential. By using ParentPay to pay for lunches, this removes the need for cash and ensures that all children order their lunches in the same way. We remind P1-3 parents about their entitlement to Free School Meals. We estimate that approximately 75% of pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals take up their entitlement. Free School Meal entitlement is now allocated automatically if a family has qualifying benefits. This information can be accessed within our school handbook.

We provide a free Breakfast Club each morning from 8.15am. Children receive choices from cereal, toast, fruit juice or milk. All children are welcome to attend breakfast club. If you would like more information on this, please contact the school office.

## **Fun Events**

Bothwell Primary recognises that events planned for enjoyment can actually put added pressure on to families. We look carefully at attendance and participation in these events in order to see if there are any patterns that require action. When undertaking school or Parent Council fundraising events, we recognise that not all families are able to contribute and we ensure that all children can participate, regardless of circumstances. We encourage parents to feel comfortable in speaking confidentially to the school in order that we can provide support where necessary.

Our Parent Council actively help us to support families who may be experiencing financial difficulties, through their contributions to the school. Whilst many of our in-school activities are free of charge or funded by our generous Parent Council, to participate in other events we often simply ask for a donation and not a fixed amount. In normal circumstances, we fund raise through the Parent Council by carrying out Christmas Fayres, sponsored events plus other annual fundraising events. However, due to current restrictions, our fundraising events are limited as we cannot have large gatherings in the school. Alongside fundraising

events, we regularly seek additional grants and external funding to alleviate the pressure of additional costs on families.

### **School Clubs**

At Bothwell Primary we have many clubs including; dance, multi-sports, library lunch club, cookery, loose parts, cross country, arts and crafts etc. We do not charge for pupils to take part but are mindful that some clubs may require specific equipment and we do what we can to ensure the necessary equipment is available for all children in the school.

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. This needs to be embedded in school improvement planning and everyday life of the school, not just a one-off event. This session, our Improvement Plan focuses on:

- Consultation with all stakeholders on spending of participatory budgeting and how this can be used to support learning.
- Ascertaining the needs of learners in order to support learning, with an aim to providing resources.
- Further support for parental engagement and involvement.

Subject to Covid-19 guidance:

- 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.
- Monitor club participation and offer regular lunchtime clubs, including a homework club, to pupils who may have issues with transport at the end of the school day.
- Continuing to ensure that we, as a school and our Parent Council are alert to our concerns around The Cost of the School Day when planning events and activities.

Additionally this session, we aim to use the Cost of the School Day Toolkit, which will help us to investigate cost barriers and poverty related challenges with children, parents, carers and staff across the school community. In turn, this will allow us to become aware of the thoughts and feelings of everyone involved and ensure that actions are put in place to reduce the financial pressures.