



Lesmahagow High School

Cost of the School Day Position Statement



“Aspire to be our best”

To empower learners with the skills to succeed and realise their true potential.

Respect | Honesty | Ambition | Resilience | Equity

At Lesmahagow High School, we recognise the need to reduce the Cost of the School Day for all of our pupils and particularly for young people who are already experiencing poverty. We examine the School Day through the following headings; Uniform, Travel, Learning, Friendship, School trips, Eating, Fun, Clubs and Home learning.

Uniform – our current uniform is plain black footwear, plain black trousers/skirt, white shirt, school tie and black school blazers. More information about our uniform is available on our website at: <http://tiny.cc/djk36y>. Blazers can be purchased from <https://scotcrestschoools.co.uk/> or parents/carers can buy a badge from the school office to sew onto a plain blazer. In addition, the school maintain a stock of blazers which are made available to young people who experience any issues in purchasing their own. Families can purchase uniforms from other sources, including low priced items from supermarkets, as the priority is for all young people to be in plain black clothing that is unbranded. We do not insist on badged sweatshirts/polo shirts. Next session we intend to update our practice by continue to offer a uniform recycling service.

Travel – the majority of our children travel to school by school bus. Transport is provided for the majority by South Lanarkshire Council. Due to unsafe travel routes, such as the motorway and rural roads without pedestrian routes, most pupils are entitled to free transport offered by SLC. We are aware that this could mean many children are not able to attend after school clubs and we therefore ensure that we have lunch time activities, as well as after school. All opportunities for clubs are shared on our school website or school app.

Learning: All young people who are in receipt of Free School Meals or identified as SIMD 1-3, do not need to pay for any core learning activities. At the start of the year we write to these parents to outline this entitlement and to explain that the school will assume that families accept this offer unless they make contact with the school to refuse it. For non-PEF pupils, the following contributions are requested towards the cost of consumables used in the subjects:

Home Economics:	S1 – S3 pupils: £11.00 per term
	Senior Phase pupils: £9.50 per term
Technical:	S1-S2 pupils: £3.00 per annum
	S3 pupils: £4.00 per annum
	Senior Phase pupils (Practical Woodwork Skills): £10.00 per annum

However, parents are advised that support is available from the school fund if any families are experiencing any challenges in meeting this contribution and are advised of the process to request this support. Other subjects, including Art, do not request any contribution and cover costs through subject budgets. Core materials required for lessons (including jotters, text books and paper) are provided and young people do not have to bring their own equipment from home. Teachers and departments, Support for Learning staff and the school librarian have arrangements in place to allow materials to be borrowed if required for homework tasks. Any costs associated for trips / excursions which are required for learning are kept to a minimum and PEF pupils are not charged for these. For lifelong learning opportunities (such as reward events and overnight excursions), the school strives to offer these at minimum expense to families and will offer subsidised or fully funded places for PEF pupils subject to agreement with individual families.

Friendships

We ensure that any pupil experiencing poverty-related bullying has a way of reporting this in confidence. We intend to gather the views of our young people and families on the Cost of the School Day and involve them in decision making around this. Our Parent Council have been involved in focused discussions at their meetings to review the Cost of the School Toolkit for Parent Councils.

School Trips

Currently our trips are planned each year by various teachers across the school. These trips can be curricular and extra-curricular in nature. The average cost of trips for pupils can vary from £20 to £500. We try to reduce the cost by making use of Pupil Equity Fund money to support young people who qualify for Free School Meals. As well as this, the school actively promotes the use of school fund resources to support young people experiencing challenging circumstances. We will continue to be mindful of the trips that we organise, specifically in relation to the costs for families. External funding is used where possible and last session we were supported by funding from the Loaningdale Trust Fund. We hope that this additional resource continues to be available to the school in the future. We do not have a policy for families with more than one child but would aim to support them with school fund resources.

Eating at school

Last school year we had 17% 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 and ensure that all young people take up this free lunch. We estimate that approximately 10% of pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals take up their entitlement. In order to increase that percentage, we regularly request and review reports from the canteen service of young people not using their allocation. Pupil Support staff discuss issues with young people and families and put in place strategies to ensure barriers are removed.

Fun Events

Lesmahagow High School 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. As with school trips, our Fun Events are planned to ensure that young people are not constantly needing to have money to attend school. We have dramatically reduced the number of non-uniform days for charities and this has reduced the costs to a family. The school's merit reward system allows all young people to participate in reward events and excursions with costs being covered by the school and partners. When young people cannot afford costs associated with any activity we ensure they can still experience it by having a clear system in place to allow support to be accessed. We currently fundraise for school funds in a range of ways, including an annual Christmas Fayre but understand that not all families are able to contribute. We are currently planning a Bag Packing event which the Parent Council will lead in the next session.

School Clubs

At Lesmahagow High School, we have the following clubs: Drama Club, German Club, Code Club, LGBT+ Club, Netball Club, Rugby Club, Lunchtime Nurture Club and Volleyball Club. We normally charge £2 per young person to take part if the event involves hiring a bus. For children who receive Free School Meals, we do not apply this charge. Some clubs

may require specific equipment e.g. badminton racquets, football boots. In this cases, the school purchase resources and support families who may not be able to afford these additional costs.

Home Learning

We try to reduce the cost of learning at home as much as possible by providing resources as necessary for young people to achieve to the best of their ability. In particular circumstances, subject teachers would ensure that young people are not disadvantaged but are supported through school fund resources. We do not have a policy in the school about lending equipment for pupils who may struggle but we ensure that any homework activity can be completed by *all* pupils no matter their family circumstances. Homework is not linked to our Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy and any pupil who does not complete homework does not receive a sanction. We-work hard with parents to realise the benefit of homework to their children's learning and attainment.

Commitment

We would encourage all parents/carers experiencing financial issues to contact their child's Pupil Support Teacher and have a supportive conversation about the support available. This will hopefully lead to the school being able to offer the appropriate provision to allow their child to receive as full and as rounded a school experience as possible.

Next steps

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

- Increasing accessibility to uniform items
- Increasing the school lunch uptake
- Being mindful of costs associated with subject areas
- Being mindful of costs associated with school trips

This statement will be replaced by June 2020 with a School Policy on Cost of the School Day.