

THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



ROSS'S STORY – CASE STUDY AND KEY QUESTIONS

Finding out about the Cost of the School Day from children and young people's perspectives means talking about poverty and its impact. Many pupils in your school may be experiencing these issues in their own lives.

The story below, about a boy called Ross, can be used to broach these potentially sensitive topics in Cost of the School Day sessions with children and young people. Reflecting on a character and a fictional scenario means that no child need feel obliged to speak about their own experiences. Participants can have control of when they, if at all, mention anything about themselves or their own lives.

- Adapt tone of story and Ross's age and interests depending on the group
- Pictures can be used to illustrate the story as appropriate. Children can potentially draw pictures of Ross and his family, the scenarios they come up with and Ross's thoughts and feelings at school.

"This is Ross. Ross is 10 years old. Ross has just moved to this area with his mum and little sister Amelie, who is 3. Ross is about to start at your school. He's a bit nervous because he doesn't know what to expect. He wants to fit in and be happy. He hopes he makes friends and that the teachers are nice. He hopes he'll be able to do the work and that there's a computing club there like there was at his old school."

Today when we talk about a typical day in your school, we're going to use our imaginations and try to think as if we're Ross – what would things be like for him? Let's find out some more information about him.

"Ross gets on pretty well with his family – well, Amelie is a bit of a pain sometimes but he likes her really. His mum used to work part time in Tesco near where they used to stay but since they moved here she's finding it difficult to find another job which will fit in with Amelie's nursery hours.

"This means that there isn't a lot of money at home and sometimes Ross knows that his mum is a bit stressed about paying bills and things like that. She quite often tells Ross that they can't afford the things he wants like new computer games and a phone."

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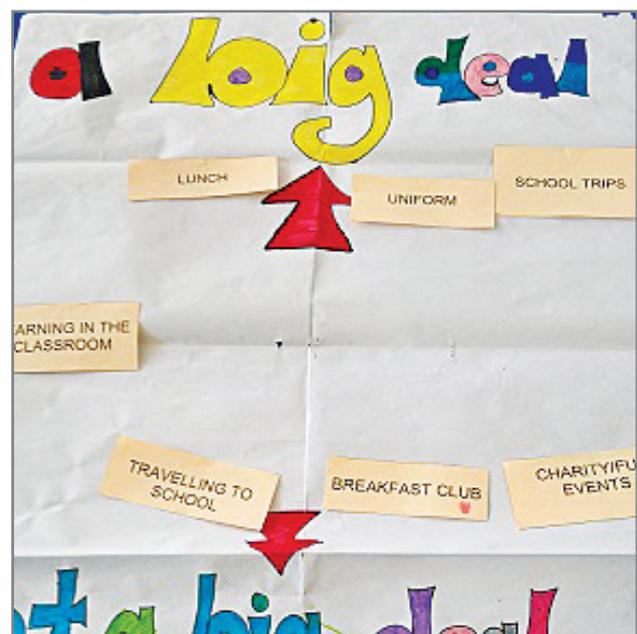
Key questions to explore

It is useful to divide the school day into parts and discuss them in turn to ensure a full account of the issues and that pupils' priority issues are made clear. The Cost of the School Day Flashcard Resource depicting different parts of the school day can be used as visual prompts when discussing Ross and his school day.

- What would Ross need to pay for in your school?
- What sorts of things cost a lot? Is there anything you think Ross would find it difficult to afford?
- How would Ross fit in at your school?
- If Ross wasn't able to afford to pay for something, what would happen?
- Is there anything Ross would miss out on doing throughout the school day because of money? Which things would be a big deal for him? How would he feel and what would he do?
- Would Ross ever feel different or left out because of not having much money? What would be a big deal for him? How would he feel and what would he do?
- Would Ross be able to get any help from teachers if he wasn't able to afford all of the school costs? How easy or difficult would it be for him to talk to them? Would his mum be able to?
- What sorts of things does your school do right now to make sure that Ross could take part and feel happy at school? Do they work well? Why or why not?
- If you were in charge of how the school is run, what would you do to make sure that Ross could take part in everything and feel happy and included?



Children's ideas about how school could support Ross and his family



Scale showing which parts of the school day would be a 'big deal' or 'no big deal' for Ross