

# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## STEP ONE

# DO THE GROUNDWORK

This first step is all about planning, communicating, raising awareness of poverty and bringing people together from all parts of the school community to take action.

### In Step One you will be:

- Raising awareness throughout the whole school community - staff, children and young people, parents and carers
- Forming a working group to lead and implement this work and monitor its impact.

### To support your work in Step One, this section of the Toolkit includes:

- [Information about child poverty in Scotland](#)
- [Information on why Cost of the School Day matters](#)
- [Cost of the School Day in policy](#)
- [Learning about what helps to develop and sustain a Cost of the School Day approach](#)
- [Guidance on setting up a Cost of the School Day working group](#)
- [Cost of the School Day stories from children and their families, providing insight into the issues low income families face](#)
- [Cost of the School Day in the curriculum.](#)

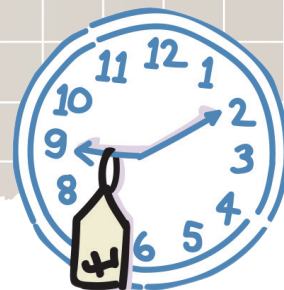
“They need to think about the diverse nature of the different families in the school.”

(Parent)

“Not all families have disposable income for endless trips and fundraising events. The assumption from the school appears that poverty and not having enough money is not something that affects parents.”

(Parent)

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Poverty varies in scale across Scotland but exists, to some extent, in every area and in every school.

If you would like to see estimated child poverty rates in your area [click here](#).

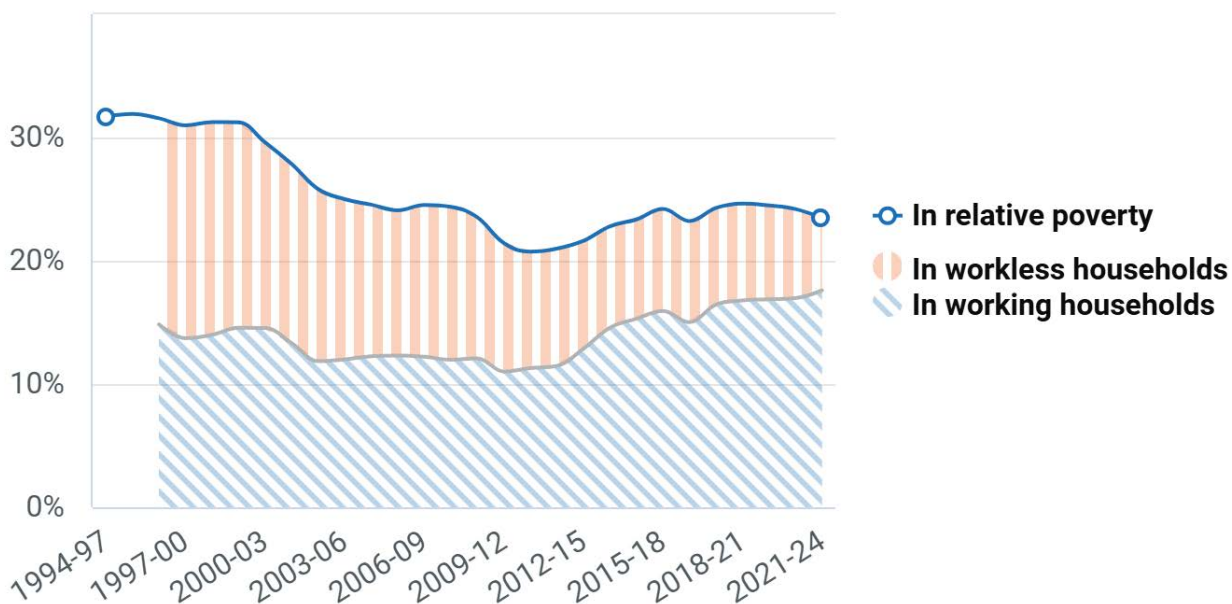
## What causes child poverty?

In Scotland, three main factors are working together to drive child poverty rates upwards.

**Inadequate income from employment** Three quarters of children living in poverty (75%) are living in working households.<sup>4</sup> Although the risk of poverty is lower in families where adults are in full time work, not every job is enough to keep a family afloat. Low pay, insecure work and not enough hours can mean many working families still face financial hardship.

### Three quarters of children in poverty live in working households

Children in relative poverty after housing costs by household work status, Scotland



Source: Family Resources Survey

4 Scottish Government [Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland 2021 - 24](#)

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## CHILD POVERTY IN SCOTLAND

Last updated May 2025

Across Scotland, it's estimated that almost one in four (250,000) children are officially recognised as living in poverty.<sup>1</sup> This means growing up in families without the resources to 'obtain the type of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities'<sup>2</sup> which are normal in 21st century Scotland.

### National and local child poverty rates

Child poverty rates have been rising both nationally and locally in recent years. Rates vary between local authority areas. The most recent local child

poverty estimates range from 29% of all children in Glasgow City to 13% in East Renfrewshire.<sup>3</sup>

Child poverty rates also vary within each local authority. This means that even local authorities with relatively low levels of child poverty may still contain areas with significant numbers of families living in poverty

**The End Child Poverty Coalition publishes data on current child poverty rates.**

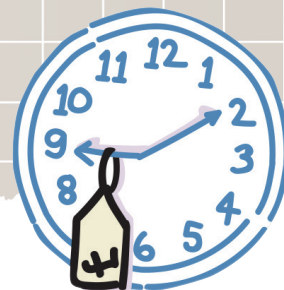


1 Scottish Government [Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland 2021-24](#)

2 Child Poverty Action Group [What is poverty?](#)

3 End Child Poverty Coalition [Child poverty in your area](#)

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Households in which no-one is in paid employment are most likely to experience poverty. Common barriers to work include a lack of suitable employment opportunities, a lack of suitable childcare, caring responsibilities, ill health and disability.

## Living costs

There are a range of goods and services which most people agree are essential: things like housing, transport, food and drink, clothing, personal items, social and cultural participation and childcare.<sup>5</sup> Families on low incomes can find it difficult to afford these essentials and when prices rise it hits these families hardest because they spend a higher proportion of their incomes on them. Being unable to afford day to day living costs can lead to a range of difficulties – for example, debt mounting up if bills can't be paid, difficulties finding work if

childcare is unaffordable, paying higher prices for food when you don't have the transport to shop around for good deals and little or no disposable income to cover household emergencies when they arise.

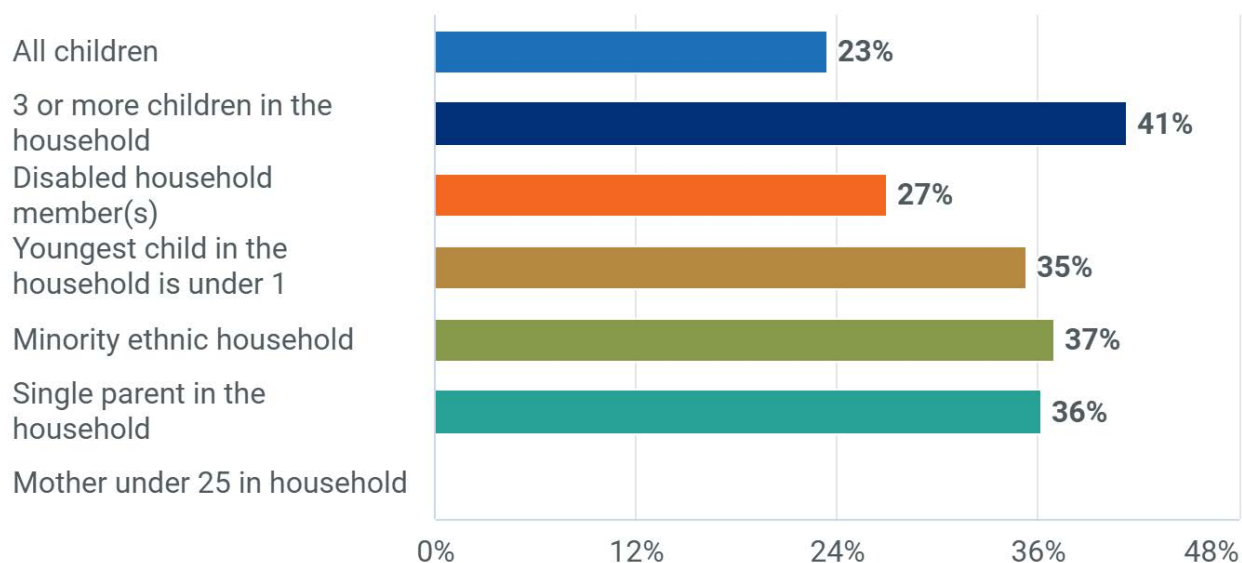
For families with children, essential household costs include those associated with going to school. The cost of things like uniforms, food, resources, trips, activities and transport can all put additional pressure on stretched budgets.

## Inadequate social security

Our social security system is meant to be a safety net for any of us facing hard times but many families claiming social security benefits are living below the poverty line. Ongoing welfare reforms are a major contributing factor to the increase in child poverty forecast for Scotland.

### Children in priority groups have a higher risk of being in relative poverty

Proportion of children in relative poverty after housing cost, Scotland 2021-24



5 Graph: [Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland 2021-24](#)



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## Which families are most at risk?

Any family can fall into poverty but it's important to understand who might be at higher risk when you're thinking about your own school community.

Households with single parents, disabled members, children under 1, three or more children, a mother aged under 25 or a minority ethnic background make up the majority of households with children that are in poverty. 5

"I think they need to not make assumptions that a family who were managing fine financially before Covid are still managing financially."

(Parent)

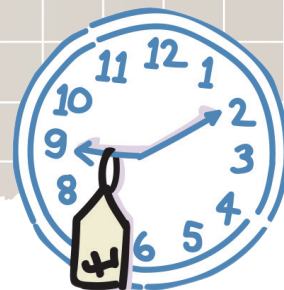
## What does the future hold?

The full financial impact of a series of events, including Covid-19, are combining to create the current cost of living crisis, which has pushed some families even deeper into hardship, and forced others into poverty for the first time.

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 set legal targets requiring the Scottish Government to ensure that fewer than 18% of children are living in poverty by 2023/24 and less than 10% by 2030. Local authorities and health boards produce annual Local Child Poverty Action Reports outlining how they are helping to meet these reduction targets, including in schools and other education settings.

All of us working in schools and with children and families can play our part in helping to tackle child poverty. Taking a Cost of the School Day approach means **reducing costs** to save families money and helping to **maximise incomes** by making sure families get the support they need.

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## WHY COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY MATTERS

Poverty can have a ferocious and long-lasting effect on children and young people's health, social, emotional and cognitive development and educational outcomes.<sup>6</sup>

Families living on low incomes often don't have the resources to access the things we know support happy healthy development: food, good quality and warm housing, social and cultural opportunities and the chance to participate in society like everyone else. Constant stress and worry about money can affect parents' and carers' health and wellbeing and, in turn, their children's.

All of this affects children at school. Growing up in poverty affects children's attainment. The poverty-related attainment gap remains wide<sup>7</sup> and although there is evidence of progress through the Scottish Attainment Challenge and wider education policies, closing it 'remains a complex and long-term endeavour'.<sup>8</sup> Covid-19 added extra pressure to this challenge, with the pandemic worsening existing inequalities and school closures having a particularly negative impact on children and young people from low income households.<sup>9</sup> The current cost of living crisis is adding significantly to the pressure on families.

The refreshed Scottish Attainment Challenge mission is to use education to improve outcomes for children and young people affected by poverty with a focus on tackling the poverty related attainment gap.

All children and young people should have equitable access to an education which helps them develop the skills, knowledge and attributes needed for learning, life and work - however, living in a low-income household can affect how children and young people are able to access that education.

### Financial barriers throughout the school day

Trips, uniform, resources for learning in class and at home, clubs and activities, food, fun events, transport... school costs which are difficult or impossible to meet can

- place barriers in the way of children's participation and learning
- risk income related exclusion and stigma amongst children and young people
- put pressure on low family budgets and further reduce stretched family incomes.

Children and young people tell us that low incomes can mean missing out on the full range of opportunities available to them. Shame and stigma surrounding poverty can mean that they feel excluded or embarrassed when unable to afford what is needed. Missing out on opportunities and feeling different makes it more difficult for children and young people to learn, to achieve and be happy at school.

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<sup>6</sup> [Scottish Government: Evidence and Insights on the Poverty Related Attainment Gap.](#)

<sup>7</sup> Audit Scotland. (2021). Improving outcomes for young people through school education. [www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/report/improving-outcomes-for-young-people-through-school-education](http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/report/improving-outcomes-for-young-people-through-school-education)

<sup>8</sup> Scottish Government. (2021). Closing the poverty-related attainment gap: progress report 2016 to 2021. [www.gov.scot/publications/closing-poverty-related-attainment-gap-report-progress-2016-2021](http://www.gov.scot/publications/closing-poverty-related-attainment-gap-report-progress-2016-2021)

<sup>9</sup> Scottish Government. (2021). Equity Audit: deepening the understanding of the impact COVID-19 and school building closures had on children from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds and setting clear areas of focus for accelerating recovery [Equity Audit \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

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“Well I think if all of your friends or people you know go to the after-school clubs, school trips, that kind of isolates you from them. You’re singled out, you’re not with them, just a spare person.”

(Young person, S5)

“It felt like they weren’t interested and that we were on our own. If it’s smallish amounts of money I don’t raise it as they don’t seem to understand.”

(Parent)

Parents and carers tell us that even small costs at school can be significant for families getting by on low incomes. They say they can feel frustrated and unseen when schools aren’t mindful of financial pressures, and that it can feel difficult and embarrassing to approach their schools for support. They may have to cut corners on other essentials to meet costs.

‘Parents just need to do without to ensure the kids don’t.’

(Parent)

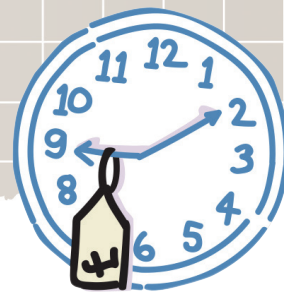
**But it doesn’t have to be like this.** Cost of the School Day is all about understanding financial barriers, reducing costs and boosting incomes.

Schools across Scotland taking action on the Cost of the School Day have the power to:

- **remove barriers to participation and drive equal access** to everything the school day has to offer
- **support children and young people’s wellbeing**, helping them to feel respected, safe, nurtured and included in all aspects of school life, be healthy, active and learn responsibility through participation in educational experiences and achieve their full potential at school without financial barriers standing in the way
- **ease financial worries and maximise incomes** – and increased family income has a causal link with improved outcomes for children and young people, particularly their cognitive development and school achievement.<sup>10</sup>

10 Stewart, K. and Cooper, K. (2017). [Does money affect children’s outcomes? An update](#). Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion.

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Find out more in Step Four about some of the simple policy and practice changes that schools and local authorities throughout Scotland have been making to reduce the cost of learning and support children and families.



■ PLAY

Watch [Why Cost of the School Day makes a difference](#), a short film featuring children, young people and staff from schools across Scotland talking about why taking action on cost barriers matters.

“Parents don’t have to feel guilty about not having money for school trips and activities - the costs are either removed via school attempts to tackle costs associated with the school day or costs are covered using our cost of the school day funding.”

(Renfrewshire Council)



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## COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY IN POLICY

Poverty awareness and action to remove cost pressures, barriers to learning and stigma cuts across all of the work that we do with children and their families. Cost of the School Day doesn't

stand alone as a separate initiative. Here are just some areas within Scottish education policy and school life where Cost of the School Day should be considered, included or addressed.

**SCOTTISH ATTAINMENT CHALLENGE**

**GETTING IT RIGHT FOR EVERY CHILD (GIRFEC)**

**BEST START, BRIGHT FUTURES: TACKLING CHILD POVERTY**

**COVID-19 RECOVERY**

**PUPIL EQUITY FUNDING**

**CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND THE UNCRC**

**ACHIEVING EQUITY, INCLUSION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE**

**PUPIL VOICE AND PARTICIPATION**

**ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR LEARNING**

**PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

**FAMILY LEARNING**

**COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

**LEARNING FOR SUSTAINABILITY**

**SELF-EVALUATION AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

**PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING**

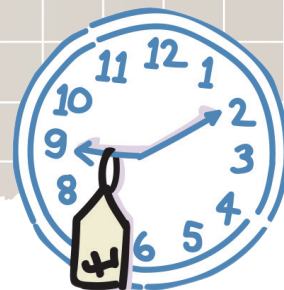
**GTCS PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS**

**CAREER LONG PROFESSIONAL LEARNING**

"Tackling the cost of the school day can help to remove financial barriers to learning and participation for children on low incomes. It can also reduce pressure on family budgets. Focusing on the cost of the school day improves equity through better understanding of barriers faced by pupils and families affected by poverty and the development of poverty aware policies and practices."

**Pupil Equity Fund:** national operational guidance 2022

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## WHAT WORKS TO DEVELOP AND SUSTAIN COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY?

An [independent evaluation of Cost of the School Day](#) found that it contributes to poverty awareness and the development of policies and practices which reduce financial pressures and increase participation. The evaluation also offers learning for schools and local authorities on what helps most when developing a Cost of the School Day approach and sustaining it over time.

**Take a look through the pointers below and think about how they apply in your setting. There are lots of resources throughout the rest of the Toolkit to help on this journey.**

### What works well in schools

- ✓ A whole-school approach to Cost of the School Day with commitment and leadership from senior management to listen and take action
- ✓ Designating Cost of the School Day lead(s) and setting up a working group to implement, monitor and review activity
- ✓ Ensuring widespread understanding of the links between Cost of the School Day and key education, poverty and children's policy priorities
- ✓ Ensuring that the whole school community hears about Cost of the School Day and is involved, including children, families and Parent Councils
- ✓ Addressing attitudes towards poverty from the start to minimise negative reactions and get everyone on board
- ✓ Making use of materials and resources in the Cost of the School Day Toolkit to involve your school community on an ongoing basis
- ✓ Considering how Cost of the School Day actions can be implemented in a non-stigmatising way which will help encourage children and families to access support
- ✓ Ensuring that Cost of the School Day doesn't stand alone but is embedded in school planning, review and improvement processes.

### What works well in local authorities

- ✓ Designating a senior leader within education services who will champion the work and take strategic responsibility for it across the authority
- ✓ Ensuring schools are supported to take forward Cost of the School Day work, identifying barriers and taking action to address them together
- ✓ Consistently communicating links between Cost of the School Day and key education, poverty and children's policy priorities
- ✓ Taking local authority-wide strategic action to tackle common challenges and support anti-poverty work in schools – for example, financial inclusion support, digital access or negotiating cheaper uniform suppliers across schools
- ✓ Including Cost of the School Day within local Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) guidance
- ✓ Supporting schools to embed Cost of the School Day in improvement planning cycles and including this in local authority review or audit processes
- ✓ Ensuring local governance structures are in place to drive progress and to monitor and understand impact
- ✓ Supporting connections between schools and local agencies providing financial support and other services.

**Find out more in Step Four about some of the ways schools and local authorities throughout Scotland have been developing and sustaining their own Cost of the School Day approaches.**

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## SETTING UP A COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY WORKING GROUP

A Cost of the School Day working group can plan, implement and monitor your school's efforts to reduce costs and remove cost barriers to participation in education.

### What can your working group achieve?

Using the How to Guide (in the introduction) and the resources in this toolkit, a Cost of the School Day working group can:

- help raise awareness throughout the school about the impact of poverty on learning and participation
- lead consultation with the school community
- highlight existing good practice
- develop an action plan to address challenges identified
- support and monitor action plan implementation by highlighting successes and impact
- develop a whole school Cost of the School Day policy.

**"It does take time to change attitudes so this needs to be on the agenda and spoken about constantly...it's not a fad."**

(Secondary school teacher)

An effective working group will help to set and share tasks and plan reasonable timescales. Regular meetings will maintain momentum and let you reflect on your progress and success.

### Membership

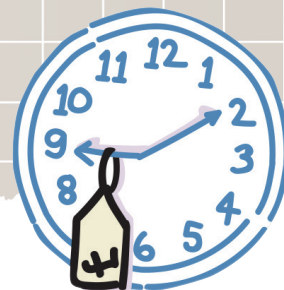
A working group can exist as a stand-alone team or work as part of a wider improvement group already active in the school. Some schools have their own pupil equalities groups that can get involved. Parent Councils can be ideal partners to include in the working group. Working groups might look different in different settings but must have the right people involved to influence, make decisions and take action.

Membership should include a variety of voices from throughout the school community alongside people with the power to make decisions and implement change – for example, representatives from senior management, a range of staff in different roles, parents and carers and children and young people.

**"It's been important for us to have a real mix of people so that there's the senior leadership there driving it but also people from different departments and with different roles. Having ownership across the school makes getting things right and getting things done so much easier."**

(Secondary school PT)

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## Making an impact

- Your group could **start by highlighting all of the current good practice in your school**. Making clear everything that is there to be built on can help set a positive and inspiring tone
- **Agreeing some simple actions which can be implemented straight away** can be really effective. These quick-wins should be easy to implement, inexpensive and bring about immediate change for children and their families. For example, if it was clear that entry fees were putting some families off of taking part in an event, could you implement donation only contributions at the next one? This small change could have an immediate impact.
- Some actions will involve a longer term approach, so **setting reasonable time scales for achieving this change in your action plan** is a good idea. For example, some schools have reviewed their policies and processes around Primary 7 school trips by reviewing their offer, their initial trip letters home, how they are highlighting financial support and planning fundraisers and PEF spend to ensure cost is not a barrier for pupils to attend.
- Many schools are facing the same types of challenges – **it can be useful to link in with and learn from good practice in other schools** which can be adapted or replicated. In Step Four you'll find lots of examples of good practice from schools around Scotland.
- **Regularly review your action plan**, update and amend it appropriately to reflect your school's current position to ensure that Cost of the School Day is embedded throughout school life.
- **Keep communicating, consulting and involving pupils and families** in what you are doing. Consider ways to share updates and get feedback on your progress from the school community.
- **It's helpful to be aware of community initiatives and groups** like school uniform banks and money advice services and, where appropriate, link up with them to enhance the work you are doing.
- **Celebrate and share your success with your school and wider community**. If possible you could share and promote good practice with neighbouring schools. Your success will support others along on their Cost of the School Day journey.

## What does success look like?

Embedding a Cost of the School Day approach will support your school to create lasting changes in culture. By reducing financial pressure on families your school is helping all pupils to participate in all parts of the school day and inspiring confidence amongst parents that their school takes issues around poverty and equity seriously. The working group will help the school as a whole to hear the voices, experiences and solutions of children, young people and parents and can help drive a clear and strategic approach to tackling financial barriers.

"We will continue to create an action plan to target the Cost of the School Day and ensure it remains at the forefront of our (and our wider community's) minds. This is something that will continue in our school as it is now embedded in our culture."

(Primary School PT working group lead)



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## COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY STORIES

The quotes used in the stories below are all from children and young people in Scottish schools, their teachers and their parents/carers. These stories can be used to prompt discussion and to reflect on practice.

### Key questions:

- **Would this happen in our school? How do we know?**
- **What measures would help to make sure that children in these situations are supported appropriately?**

**Aisha is in S1. Her mum made sure that she had the correct uniform at the start of the school year but she's grown out of her shoes and lost a few things. Her mum won't have any money for new uniform until the end of the month.**

“It's way different, in primary it didn't matter as much but now in high school it's different. You get some nice kids but lots of bullies. Teachers are like 'where's your tie?' especially after assembly. You get told you have to get one for the next day. Some people get paid monthly... but they expect it the next day.”

**Jenna is in S4 and has just moved outwith the school catchment to live with her gran. She used to walk to school but now has to get two buses every day.**

“I have to get a bus into town that's £4 then another bus in that's £2.80 so it's costing me 6 or 7 pounds every day. A bus pass is like £30 a month. But it's my school whether it's my catchment school or not.”

**Jenna's friend Chelsea gets the school bus home which leaves right after the bell.**

“I'm doing the school play so you've got to stay back after school and you've got to stay back to work on projects and all that. So it means I can't get the school bus home. I've got to pay for public transport afterwards.”

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**Gohar is 12. His mum works part time in a shop and cares for his grandmother. His dad has just started a new job as a security guard. Gohar is not eligible for free school meals but his family struggle to pay for lunch every day.**

“I think free meals should be for everyone because even if there is two parents it doesn't mean they're going to have more money. My dad had to get kicked out of his job because they couldn't afford to pay the workers. He got redundant in October, November and he's only just starting his new job this month.”

**Gohar's head teacher knows that there are many children in his situation**

“We have families who cannot claim for free school meals and they are breadline families. The parents are so proud and they go off to work but their children often come in hungry in morning.”

**Tess is in P5. Her family are managing on a very tight budget and don't always have the small amounts of money needed for fun days and fundraising events.**

“There's nothing to do at the summer fair if you don't have money. Even throwing a sponge at the teacher costs about £1. Sometimes you just have to sit in class if you don't have any money, that's happened to me. You get made fun of.”

**Layla is 14 and has four brothers and sisters. Her mum has told her that there's no way she can afford to go on the school skiing trip.**

“My mum felt guilty that I couldn't go. Why do we have costly trips then? It puts people under pressure and it makes people embarrassed and disappointed if they can't go. Last trip I missed it was just me in my class and that was rubbish, the majority of people were away on the trip. I'd rather just stay off - cos if I'm not doing anything on activity weeks I just don't come in because there's no point, you just sit on a class and see a movie when you could just sit in your house.”

**Lewis is 12. He receives free school meals but only occasionally eats lunch in school.**

“If your pals are going out at lunch you'll be a loner. It puts you out the group because they're going out and then you're sitting there on your own with a free meal. You have to stay here and have your free school meal or you could go with them and just watch them while you're starving.”

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**Tess's mum is frustrated by the small but frequent charges requested by school**

“Not only does their school require specific pieces of equipment such as calculators, glue sticks, certain expensive pencils and pens, rulers to name a few, but they run so many events during school hours which cost money. If the parents cannot pay, the children have to sit out. An example being yet another fundraising event, a talent show during school hours, costing £1 each to go (or take part) plus money for refreshments and tuck. The children get reprimanded for not bringing in the essential stationery kit, they lose golden time at the end of class - once again singled out because we can't afford it.”

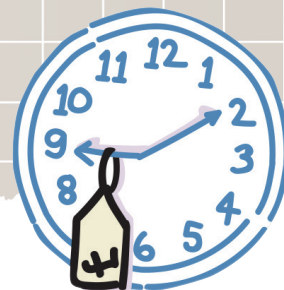
**Mark is a single parent with two girls in primary school.**

“I struggle to keep up with charges on what seems a non-stop basis. They think I can pay but I struggle putting food on the table for both of us and pay my bills. I've already had to stop their swimming lessons at the weekend. I have nothing more I can cut back on. Life is already hard enough without school making it even harder and risking kids being labelled or bullied because their parents can't afford to keep up.”

**Paul is in S5. He is taking Higher English and Modern Studies and National 5 Economics, French and Geography. He doesn't have a computer at home. His school library is open for 40 minutes at lunchtime and for an hour after school each day.**

“It's difficult in any subject that requires an essay - all the teachers ask for it to be emailed to them, they don't like getting it in paper form. One teacher wouldn't accept my homework 'cause it was handwritten. I've got to go to the library because we don't have a computer at home and I've had to hand in homework late or rush it and it hasn't been the best because I've only been able to get there at lunch or break and sometimes I've got to skip lunch to make sure I get the work done. If it's to be in on the Monday and it's Friday there's not much you could do.”

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## COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY WITHIN THE CURRICULUM

Talking about poverty and Cost of the School Day with children and young people can involve a broad range of issues relevant to the curriculum and support reflection on their own values and beliefs. Topical issues raised for discussion by children and young people of all ages have included:

- reasons behind inequalities in society
- causes and consequences of poverty
- the social security system and welfare reform
- poverty and children's rights
- food insecurity
- in work poverty and low wages
- attitudes towards poverty in society
- what poverty looks like globally, nationally and locally
- media representations of poverty.

Cost of the School Day, or child poverty more broadly, can be addressed in many parts of the curriculum and at a range of levels. For example, this work could be part of:

**Health and wellbeing:** helping learners to explore their rights and the rights of others; how to bring about positive change at school and in the wider community; and the factors which create a more welcoming environment for all.

**Social studies:** exploring the impact of inequality, discrimination or prejudice on people's lives; analysing why some groups experience inequality; attitudes towards inequality; how the needs of groups within the local community can be supported and how inequality might be addressed.

**Religious and moral education:** thinking about values, and how they can affect actions; considering how values like honesty, respect and compassion might be applied to moral issues; and thinking about the impact moral decision making has on society.

"It's better to educate kids on poverty. I think they should do more, like, financial awareness of the areas we're in because these are some of the poorest areas in Dundee. And if you were to take that and teach kids more about that then I think they'd take people having less money less as a joke and take it more seriously. I think in the younger years they think 'oh you don't have that, you're not good enough' but that's because of a lack of knowledge."

Young person, S5, Dundee

"Pupils need to be more open minded. Maybe if we were taught lessons about people who have less money... You need to be brought up in an environment where you're open to people who are different. If you're brought up to be open to talking about these things then you'll be a better adult and then our generation will be better."

P7 pupil, Glasgow



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## Learner voice and participation

Exploring poverty and inequality and thinking about how to make their environment more inclusive for all can also support children's participation, voice and activism around social issues.

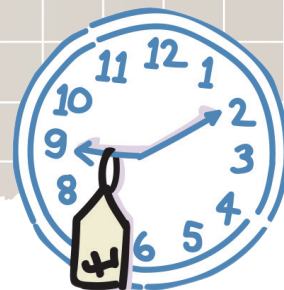
"I think sometimes staff are afraid of stigmatising, afraid of getting it wrong. My advice to schools would be to not be so afraid about talking about poverty because you need to be talking about it. It's a serious issue and the kids can cope with talking about it actually better than we can. If you give them the platform and give them the space you'll be blown away by what they're able to do and achieve."

Correen Dickson, Teacher,  
Queen Anne High School

"I think with us being young adults, it gets it across more. Because it's us that are leading it, teachers and higher up people say, oh, they're taking the initiative and trying to help. The spotlight is on us and people listen to us."

S6 student, Queen Anne High School

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St John Ogilvie High School in South Lanarkshire has started an S1 Cost of the School Day pupil group to support their work on reducing cost barriers and achieving equity:



"It has been great to get their input into our policies and also into the Cost of the School Day lessons we have incorporated as part of our S1 course. Many of the young people involved are keen to support everyone in their school community, and their input into how the school continues to develop its Cost of the School Day policies and strategies is likely to be invaluable."

Leigh Galloway, Principal Teacher of Equity,  
St John Ogilvie High School

Stigma can prevent people openly discussing poverty at school and therefore many misconceptions about poverty or people with financial struggles are not challenged. Fundamentally it comes down to education - not just awareness but education on action to reduce and prevent poverty related stigma. If poverty is addressed frequently and from a young age all stigma towards poverty would be reduced.

(Braes High School Cost of the School Day pupil group)



Cost of the School Day group logo, Braes High School, Falkirk

# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## CASE STUDY: ST JOHN OGILVIE HIGH SCHOOL, SOUTH LANARKSHIRE

As part of their wider equity work, staff at St. John Ogilvie High School in Hamilton, South Lanarkshire have been finding ways to include the Cost of the School Day in the curriculum.

### S1 Modern Studies lesson overview

These S1 Modern Studies lessons, developed by Karly Japp at St John Ogilvie High School, have a numeracy related learning intention and success criteria around calculating the actual cost of a school day. The lessons include learning about local poverty rates, cost barriers and their impact at school and reflection on what their school does well to overcome these barriers and what more could be done.

The class starts by looking at the costs they might have already encountered that day. They then learn more about the current levels of poverty in Scotland and in their local area and, using the **Cost of the School Day clock (in Step Two)**, look across their whole school day to work out where costs lie, and what barriers they might present to children and families in their school.

Today I will..

- Use numeracy skills to budget and calculate prices of a school day

### Success Criteria

- I will use my numeracy skills to calculate prices, budget and work out the cost of a school day



# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



Why is it important to address the cost of a school day?

- By addressing and understanding costs we can support families and prevent any stress or anxiety
- Removes financial barriers to participation, making everyone feel included and supporting health and well being of all.
- Included in all aspects of school life
- Feel respected, safe and included in school
- Learn responsibly and feel healthy, active and nurtured through all school experiences

## Starter – Brainstorm with Neighbour

Think about everything  
you've done today and take  
a guess at how much you  
think it would have cost



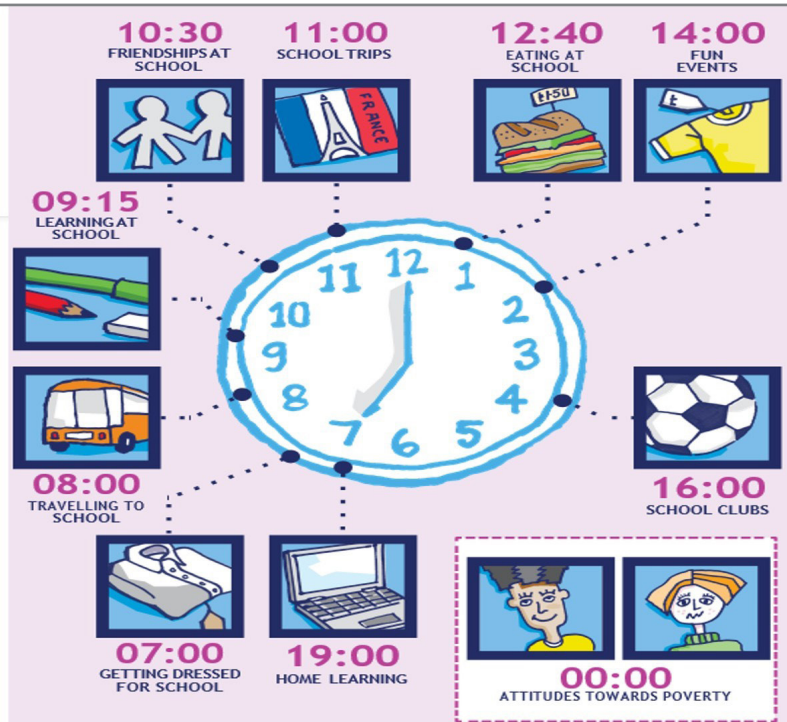


# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



In your pairs,

1. Using the clock identify the costs of a school day.
2. What barriers/problems could children and families face throughout the school day
3. What could schools do to support children and families



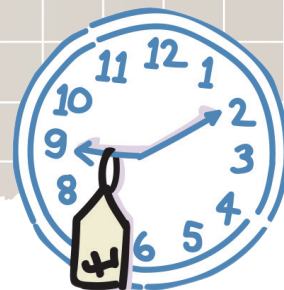
## Flash Card Activity

Each group has been given an envelope with a set of 10 flash cards and pound coins:

As a group you must work together to distribute your money to each part of the school day with one person in your team keeping a note of how much you are spending on each flashcard.

We will then discuss each groups choices together, be ready to give reason why for each of your flashcards

# THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



## Plenary

### THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



Now that we've covered the cost of the school day..

Is there anything else you think we could do to support children and families with the cost of the school day?



Using the **Flashcard resource (In Step Two)**, groups then think about how much money needs to be spent at different points of the school day and discuss their decisions.

Young people are invited to reflect on why it's important to reduce or remove barriers, and the difference it might make to them and their friends. The class finish by thinking through what their school does well to support them and what else can be done to support children and families with the cost of the school day.

**"We found that this lasted a couple of periods because it generated so much discussion with first year pupils. It was particularly good to hear their thoughts because they could reflect on primary experiences as well as their first few months of secondary."**

Leigh Galloway, Principal Teacher of Equity at St John Ogilvie

St. John Ogilvie High School also features in our [\*\*Talking about Costs and Money at School resource\*\*](#), alongside exemplars of other schools working to enhance or refine their approach to communicating with their school communities about costs.