

THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY

Voice Leaders Meeting Summary

October 29, 2025

Meeting agenda

- Reflections on the Cost of the School Day Young People's Summit
- Explore and comment on the five main calls in the Young People's Education and Poverty Manifesto
- Highlight recent case study and resources.

Cost of the School Day Young People's Summit recap

80 pupils aged P5 – S6 met in Glasgow where they shared initiatives from their schools to reduce education related costs, took part in workshops exploring future without child poverty, met and quizzed the First Minister and contributed to a young people's poverty and education manifesto.

Here's a short film and information about the summit.

Learning and practice examples shared by pupils are being collated and will be made available on the website shortly.

Carolina Sharp, an S6 pupil from Kilmarnock Academy, shared her experience of attending the summit and some of the work she is involved with in her school to tackle the Cost of the School Day.

Carolina said that she has been part her school's Cost of the School Day Committee since S3 and has led on surveying parents to help identify top cost concerns.

"I felt that it was really important to address and be part of a committee that targets cost issues when it comes to education, because I believe strongly that is something that no parent or child should worry about."

Initiatives at Kilmarnock Academy include:

- Killie Café - Free breakfast for all pupils that opens from 8am, giving pupils a relaxed space to prepare for the school day.
- Uniform support - Blazer rental scheme for £10 a year and access to spare uniforms. ***"To rent a blazer from the school, which is really handy for the seniors since it can be a lot more costly to get your own."***

- Trip funding - Guidance staff help ensure no pupil misses out due to cost, supporting families with grant applications etc.

At the summit, Carolina asked the First Minister about government priorities on tackling poverty and was pleased to hear it is a top priority.

“They take poverty across schools in Scotland very seriously and it seems that from his response and the way he spoke on behalf of all the other parliamentary representatives, that they are going to keep working on it.”

Carolina also emphasised the summit was important for sharing ideas across schools and inspiring others.

Young People’s Education and Poverty Manifesto 2026-31

Sara Spencer led a discussion on the five main calls from children and young people that are forming the manifesto.

Five key calls to the next Scottish Government – based on views shared by young people at the summit and other Voice network engagement:

1. End child poverty, ensure families have what they need to live well and support learning.
2. Funding to remove cost pressures in all schools, make support consistent across Scotland.
3. Meet basic needs at school, this includes food, school clothing, devices, and learning resources.
4. Ensure access to school trips, address transport costs, and rural barriers.
5. Involve young people in decision-making. Create systems for ongoing youth engagement in national policy around poverty and education.

Leaders shared views and thoughts on the calls in the meeting through this [Padlet](#).

Cost of the School Day Resources

Alison Brown highlighted a recent briefing detailing [Cost of the School Day in West Lothian](#) and a reminder to check out the [Activities for voice network groups](#) and [Cost of having fun at school](#) which is helpful when considering some of the pressure costs associated with fun events, especially in the run up to Christmas.

Next Steps

- The manifesto will be finalised in the coming weeks and shared widely.
- Leaders can continue to feedback on the manifesto calls here is being gathered via the [Padlet](#)

- A follow-up meeting with the First Minister and 12 pupils is scheduled for December, where they will share the manifesto with the politicians attending.
- Practice examples gathered at the summit will be shared more widely.
- Suggestions for future Voice leaders' meeting themes and topics please email kcampbell@cpagscotland.org.uk