

Secondary Cost of the School Day Voice network meeting - summary

Date: 10 June 2026

Opened with a quiz about child poverty statistics, current school clothing grant allowances and additional support families can access. Well done everyone.

Key discussion points

1. Pupils shared the best thing their schools does to reduce costs and make sure everyone can take part

Participants shared a range of initiatives already making a positive difference:

- Uniform rooms providing free school clothing.
- “Secret lockers” stocked with stationery, hygiene products and period products to allow pupils to access essentials discreetly.
- Additional food in school and access to wider community support within schools.
- Prom clothing libraries and ideas for pop-up events offering affordable hair, beauty and clothing support.
- Income maximisation support for families through home-school practitioners.
- Improved school websites to signpost financial support and available benefits.
- Young people delivering presentations to P7 pupils to reduce anxiety about moving to secondary school and explain available support.

There was agreement that support should always be accessible, inclusive and free from stigma.

The group recognised that the final year of school can be particularly expensive due to prom, leavers’ hoodies, day trips and other celebrations

Rather than removing these experiences, discussion focused on making them more affordable so that no young person misses out.

2. Young people's influence

The meeting celebrated young people's involvement over the last year including:

- Speaking at the Scottish Parliament.
- Interviewing politicians, including the First Minister.
- Attending the CPAG summit.
- Presenting at conferences.
- Engaging directly with decision makers about child poverty and education.

There was enthusiasm to continue ensuring young people's voices shape policy and can meet with decision makers.



Orla and Daisy at the Edinburgh City Council event



Lily and Penny at the Children in Scotland conference

3. New online learning sessions

CPAG plans to develop introductory online sessions for schools beginning Cost of the School Day work. Participants suggested sessions should:

- Be 30–40 minutes maximum.
- Include regular breaks.
- Be highly interactive.
- Explain: child poverty, Cost of the School Day, practical actions schools can take, current statistics, upcoming opportunities and events.

Young people recommended quiz-based using tools such as Kahoot, Blooket and Mentimeter. Incorporate TikTok-style content with clear, concise messages. Participants noted that attention spans are shorter and that brief, engaging content is more effective.

4. Using social media

There was strong support for creating social media content with the aim to increase awareness in a format that young people naturally engage with. Young people said they enjoy making and creating short TikTok-style explainers, including interviews with pupils and teachers.

5. Future plans

Next year's priorities include:

- Monthly introductory online sessions.
- A young person designed "How to" guide for schools starting Cost of the School Day work.
- More opportunities to meet MSPs and influence policy.
- Continued sharing of successful practice between schools.
- Ongoing promotion of the School Shouldn't Cost campaign and its five key asks.

6. Fundraising

The group discussed fundraising carefully, recognising that fundraising itself should never create financial pressure.

Suggestions included:

- Optional donations rather than fixed charges.
- Low-cost activities (e.g. £1 movie afternoons, pyjama days).
- Anonymous giving ("chuck it in a bucket").
- Community fundraising that avoids stigma.
- Using funds to support school trips or opportunities for pupils.
- Examples included fundraising for Cash for Kids, while CPAG staff highlighted examples from their Ideas Bank showing inclusive fundraising approaches.

Close of meeting

A huge well done to all voice member and the brilliant work they are doing in their schools to reduce costs and make sure no misses out. We are excited to see what you do next year.