

Good practice tips and strategies from Scottish Learning Festival 2017 delegates

We asked delegates attending our Cost of the School Day seminar at the Scottish Learning Festival to tell us some of their own good practice in reducing school costs and overcoming financial barriers to participation.

Uniform



“Water bottles, pencil cases with contents, gym shoes, shorts, t-shirts, winter jackets available to be distributed to children who require any of them.” (School)

“PEF used to imaginatively support the Cost of the School Day – one Stirling school has bought new blazers for all P7 (SIMD 1, 2, 3/ FME) about to start S1.” (Local authority)

“Uniform recycling by the Parent Council.” (Local authority)

“School uniform bank.” (School)

“Let pupils who don’t have PE kit take part! Even if they are in a shirt and school trousers because often they want to, especially in primary school!” (School)

“I help run a school uniform bank. We have had success in reaching some of the poorest families but NOT those struggling just above the limit of benefits. Perhaps through shame or a feeling that they are not ‘poor enough’. Therefore we have set up a uniform exchange and fun day to allow them to donate, swap or buy uniform at a low cost. We are working with local schools to let families know about it and encourage them to access our service.”
(Voluntary sector)

Trips



“Apply for Historic Scotland grants to pay for transport for school trips.” (School)

“£100 grant for SIMD 1 and 2 pupils for P7 residential. (School)

“Collaboration with EU Erasmus+ to part fund an exchange programme with a German school.” (School)

“No child excluded from trip/activity if they have not paid.” (School)

“Access as many free events as possible for shared experiences.” (School)

“Fundraiser for France trip – cycle to France in 1 day, done on an exercise bike, advertised in local paper and in shop windows.” (School)

“Fundraising for P7 residential trip.” (School)

“Applying for all/any funding from outside agencies.” (School)

“Subsidise costs of shows and trips.” (School)

“Lower costs if more than one child in the family.” (School)

“At Brownies and Guides we try to fundraise as a group to subsidise trips and try to apply that to everyone so that the girls who are from families that struggle financially don’t feel singled out.” (Voluntary sector)

Eating at school



“Breakfast clubs for all children who wish it, not just those in poverty – to ensure no stigma.” (Scottish Government)

“Breakfast club with zero cost for low income families.” (School)

“Edinburgh Young Carers deliver a snack to young carers caring for a parent with an addiction. Discreetly delivered to children at school to enjoy or swap at morning break.” (Voluntary sector)

“Donated food from Tesco is made available for all parents to access to ensure that nobody is left out!” (Voluntary sector)

Resources for learning



“Design and Tech department ask for a donation – no pressure.” (School)

“If it is required for the course - e.g. theatre trip – it should be free!” (School)

“Hire mini-books/laptops/tablets at very low rates.” (School)

Fun events



“S6 pupils are trying to set up a monthly payment plan to alleviate costs of end of school stuff – yearbook, prom, leavers’ day etc.” (School)

“If we have a non-uniform day we ask the children to come in dressed as they please with no stipulation on what to wear. We also just ask for a small donation if possible rather than stating an amount.” (School)

“Less fundraising at the school – there are too many, e.g. wear green for X and pay £1. This is currently being discussed at Parent Council meetings.” (Parent Council)

Clubs and activities



“Sport, physical activity and extra-curricular clubs FREE FOR ALL.” (School)

“Recycled sports kit – boots etc. Local clubs help provide kit through sponsorship.” (School)

“Travel to sports provided – school mini bus pickups/drop offs.” (School)

Working with parents and carers

“Good partnership/ communication/ relationships with parents to find out if they are receiving the help they may be entitled to.” (Parent Council)

“Partnership with parents/ good communication and relationships with parents to find out if they need help or support.” (School)

Cost of the School Day approaches and ideas

“Stirling Council Cost of the School Day group has compiled a series of self-reflective questions that all teachers ask themselves to ensure that they have thought about the impact of a lesson, trip, event, etc. on the young people.” (Local authority)

“We need to do much more – I like a fundraising approach to all school trips, a calendar of costs and ways of providing more info to parents on a benefits as a standard part of P7 transition.” (School)

“I’m not a teacher yet (hoping to apply soon) but I’d like to help provide free sanitary products in my future school to help tackle period poverty for girls.” (Individual)

Cost of the nursery day

“What I would want to see in the nurseries I visit:

- Free snack
- Nursery has own wellies and outdoor suits for outdoor play

- Trips funded through realistic fundraising – bag packing is a great practical idea
- Promotion of free ideas for play.”

(Care Inspectorate)

Support from the local community and other organisations

“Serve Your Local School (SYLS) gives examples of how local churches can get involved to help schools – breakfast clubs, donations of gym shoes a washing machine, juice and biscuits after exams, resources for science projects etc etc – local churches and SYLS are willing to help.” (Voluntary sector)

“At Young Scot, we are working with some local authorities to establish how smart technology within the Young Scot card can support closing the attainment gap, remove the stigma associated with poverty and also challenge rural poverty.” (Voluntary sector)

For more top tips from schools across Scotland, check out our regularly updated good practice webpage:

www.cpag.org.uk/content/good-practice-stories-and-tips

If you would like to share the work that you’ve done in your school or local authority on our website and in our regular Cost of the School Day E-News, please email costoftheschoolday@cpagscotland.org.uk or call the team on 0141 611 7097.