



# St Charles Primary

## Cost of the School Day Policy

### Our Rationale

At St Charles Primary we are committed to provide an environment where every member of our school community feels valued and respected and that everyone is treated with kindness, fairness and understanding. The impact that poverty makes on a child's education is well documented. Living in poverty provides many challenges and can affect all aspects of a child or young person's wellbeing, achievement, and attainment. While our school cannot change the financial situation anyone finds themselves in, we can ensure that what happens in our school doesn't add to the financial challenges our families face.



**Our vision is for St. Charles to be a family of love, kindness and respect.**

Inspired by love and the values of the Gospel, we empower everyone in the St. Charles family to reach their full potential.

In partnership with parents, parishes and our community we aim to:

**Keep the child at the heart of all we do.**

**Be Ready-** Create a loving, safe and inclusive environment.

**Be Respectful-** Through kindness to ourselves and others we recognise the dignity and uniqueness of every person.

**Be Responsible-** Develop resilience, independence and the skills and knowledge needed for learning and life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

## Our Aims

In St Charles Primary we aim to ensure that all of our pupils have the same opportunities and expectations in life. Money should pay no part in how any of our children achieve and experience their education.

We aim to pay close attention to the Cost of the School Day. We will be clear with our parents and carers about any possible financial cost which may come up in the course of the school year, providing plenty of advance warning of upcoming costs to facilitate budgeting. We pledge that anyone who cannot afford a particular cost e.g for a residential trip, will have our full support in ensuring their child can still take part, regardless of cost.

**No child will miss out on any aspect of their school life because of financial pressures.**

## Awareness and Empathy

At St Charles' Primary we ensure all our staff are Poverty Aware. All staff will take part in training on this subject either in person through the CQIS and/or online through the NHS Child Poverty Learning Hub . All staff will receive an annual update on Cost of the School Day each August from August 2024.

We keep track of all money requested throughout the school year and ensure, in line with our school values, that no parent or child is made to feel embarrassment or shame if they cannot afford to contribute to any event. This will never exclude them from participating.

We will aim to reduce the amount of the school day each year and include financial implications as a vital factor in any decisions we undertake.

Working in partnership with our Parent and Pupil Councils, we will issue a Cost of the School Year Calander to our parents at the start of the school year so that they can see immediately when there will be events which may have a cost. This will allow families to budget if they are able, or to contact the school if they require assistance.

Families will never need to prove their financial circumstances before help is given and parents/carers are made aware through

School Newsletters and correspondence that they can contact any member of the Management Team if they require help in paying for anything in school.

### **Friendships and attitudes to poverty**

We take part in Challenge Poverty Week each year. This gives us the opportunity to talk about poverty and the impact it can have on families. We are aware of the fact that poverty can form a basis of bullying and our staff are vigilant to this and treat all bullying in the same manner as outlined in our Anti Bullying Policy.

### **Support for Families**

Our school website has details of agencies who may be able to help families struggling with finances e.g Money Matters. We also signpost using the resource Money Is Not The Only Problem.

Any parent who needs support to pay for any trip or extra curricular experience should contact Mrs Reid or Mrs Deery (our CoSD lead) who will help with complete confidentiality and compassion.

If a family is under stress, this may directly affect how a child is managing at school. While our school is not responsible for all aspects of family life, we will do our utmost to assist when we can, if required. Families experiencing financial hardship are encouraged to speak to our Senior Management Team so that they can be directed to the most appropriate help.

### **Communication with Families**

We guarantee to be non-stigmatising in all our communications and will make no presumptions in identifying the families who may be in need of help. We encourage anyone to contact us in person, through email or telephone if they need help or advice on any matter.

At St Charles' Primary we ensure that all messages are appropriate and sensitive on whichever media we use and we encourage anyone who finds this not to be the case to contact us immediately in order to discuss and rectify.

### **Fundraising**

Our Senior Management Team work closely with our Parent Council to make certain that there are not too many events which cost throughout the school year. For school discos or fun events where

there may be a cost, this will be collected discreetly online or in school, so that no child will feel shame at not being able to pay.

Non-uniform days will be kept to a minimum in any school year as we recognise this can be difficult for some children or young people who may feel under pressure to wear expensive or fashionable clothes. Again, any money collections will not be done by targeting individuals.

When appropriate and available, we seek to access grants from charities and commercial organisations rather asking parents for funds for resources and projects.

## **The Cost of the School Day**

### **Uniform**

Our school uniform consists of grey trousers or skirt and a green sweatshirt/jumper with a white shirt and school tie. Our gym kit is a generic red polo shirt and black shorts or joggers. We do not require our families to purchase branded school wear with our school badge.

We have good quality second-hand uniforms available and encourage all families to make use of these to ensure we are recycling as much as possible. We publish reminders of this regularly throughout the school year as well as requests for donations of any good quality uniforms that no longer fit.

### **Travelling to school**

As a number of our children are brought to school by bus, we offer a variety of extra-curricular clubs at lunchtime to ensure travel arrangements don't affect accessibility for any children.

### **Breakfast Club**

Our Breakfast Club takes place in the school dinner hall and is open from 8.15 am until 9am and is free for all.

### **Snack/Fruit Break**

We make good use of any leftover fruit and toast from our breakfast club and lunch time by making it easily accessible for any child who may need it at breacktime and afternoon fruit break. All children know how to access it discreetly and without having to ask for permission.

## **School Lunches**

We all work better when we aren't hungry and our body is fuelled. South Lanarkshire Council have an automated system for families to get free school meals meaning that it is only children and young people who live in another Authority who would need to actually apply for this.

We are aware, however, that there are still families struggling who may not qualify for free school meals and we encourage families to speak to us if they are struggling to provide a lunch. We will never see a child go hungry.

As with all South Lanarkshire primary schools, our Cook in Charge shares any food that has not been used. Any left over fruit will be used either at lunchtime or collected by the school to use for snacks.

## **School trips**

Any trip that takes place during the school day and is linked to the curriculum will not have any charge. We may occasionally ask for a donation to help with the cost of transport for a whole school trip e.g to the Pantomime but this will be done through Parent Pay and no child will miss out because a donation has not been given. We use Parent Council funds to subsidise any whole school trip, in order to reduce the cost for our families.

For the senior Residential trip we will always give enough notice to ensure that parents/carers can 'pay up' small amounts of money each month. For families where this would be difficult, we will find another way for the child to go on the trip – eg local Parish contributions and sponsorships. No child will miss out on the "residential experience" because of money.

We are aware that there can be 'hidden costs' to trips and work hard to avoid these wherever possible. School uniform is worn on any trips throughout the school day and there is no access to any shops for any children.

For residential trips we will have a second hand 'swap shop' in the months leading up to the trip to ensure that clothing is not a barrier to participation.

At St Charles' Primary School we will always 'shop around' before booking any school trip to ensure good value for money and will prioritise this when choosing a destination.

## **Fun Events**

At St Charles' Primary we believe fun should be free wherever possible and not all fun events need to have additional expense. We want to make sure our children don't miss out on fun experiences so we still take part in special events but make every effort to ensure these involve little or no cost. For example:

World Book Day participation will not involve dressing up in expensive costumes but the joy of books will be celebrated by having fun reading activities instead

Halloween in-school celebrations and disco will take place but during the week before Halloween we will encourage our families to hand in old costumes that no longer fit and allow our children to swap for a different costume. We are also supported by our local supermarket who often donate Halloween stock.

For Christmas Jumper Day we do not take part in the charity fundraising but we do have fun in our seasonal jumpers. Again, we will have a 'swap shop' to allow parents to recycle jumpers that no longer fit.

## **School Clubs**

None of our after-school or lunch time clubs cost and all equipment is provided for by the school.

Our school community voted for our Participatory Budget allocation from our PEF funding to be spent on Sports Coaches and travel to sporting events. This ensures all children have access to skilled coaches and the experience of representing our school at sporting events at no cost.

## **Learning at School**

While we recognise that some children are given pencil cases as gifts and enjoy bringing them to class, our children are not encouraged to bring their own stationery as all equipment is provided. This ensures all the children have access to the same resources.

## **Learning at Home**

We will never give homework that requires our families to provide additional resources. If any additional resources or equipment is required, it will be provided by the school.

## **Conclusion**

We believe all of our children should have the same experiences at school and are committed to making this a reality. Money will never be the reason a child does not achieve or experience all the benefits of their time at St Charles' Primary. Partnership between home and school and the relationships we build together are vital for everyone and we believe that when we have open and honest communication everyone succeeds.