

## ITEM No ...2.....

**REPORT TO:** CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICES COMMITTEE – 9 DECEMBER 2019

**REPORT ON:** COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY INITIATIVE

**REPORT BY:** EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE

**REPORT NO:** 402-2019

### 1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report presents the recommendations of the Cost of the School Day (COSD) report produced by Child Poverty Action Group Scotland in collaboration with staff and pupils from schools across Dundee.

### 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- i. instruct the Executive Director of Children and Families Service to continue to monitor the implementation of the Cost of the School Day Action Plans that form part of School Improvement Plans.

### 3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no additional financial implications arising from the Child Poverty Action Group work as the project is funded through the Scottish Attainment Challenge grant.

### 4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 Dundee City Council and the Dundee Partnership adopted the revised Fairness Action Plan for Dundee in November 2016 (Article IV of the Minute of the Policy & Resources Committee on 14 November 2016 refers). Building on the recommendations of the Dundee Fairness Commission, one of the priority outcomes related to Closing the Education Gap.

4.2 The Children and Families Service has made a clear and strong commitment to tackling poverty and its impact on the lives and attainment of children and young people in Dundee. Many of these are directly reducing costs for pupils and parents while also improving health & wellbeing, literacy and numeracy. The work of the Scottish Attainment Challenge is the most visible additional investment in better outcomes and this is augmented by the significant contribution made in each school through poverty related activity being funded and implemented through the Pupil Equity Fund to support closing the attainment gap.

4.3 In October 2016, the Scottish Government published its new Fairer Scotland Action Plan. This included a pledge by the Dundee Partnership and Dundee City Council to “commission joint work with the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) Scotland to facilitate a Cost of the School Day initiative during the 2016/17 year. CPAG will work with pupils, parents and teachers to identify and remove key cost barriers so that all children and young people from low income households can fully engage in their education.”

4.4 Over the course of the first year of work the project conducted:

- 62 workshops with 485 primary school pupils
- 22 workshops with 71 secondary school pupils

- 20 focus groups with 205 members of staff in 11 primary schools, 2 secondary schools and 2 nurseries
  - Discussions with 198 parents and carers through focus groups, informal chats during holiday provision, school events and at nursery gates
- 4.5 Pupils took part in two sessions. A case study involving a character from a low income household called Ross/ Katie provided a way into exploring school costs in a sensitive manner. Children then were invited to identify school costs, where these might create a barrier to participation in school, what was currently being done to support families with costs and what more could be done.
- 4.6 Semi- structured discussion guides were used in parent and staff focus groups to explore key issues across the school day. All workshops and sessions were recorded and transcribed. Each school and nursery received an individual report of their findings and were supported to develop an action plan to address identified issues.
- 4.7 Taking account of the work of the project team each school in the city has reviewed the needs of children and young people facing cost barrier to participation in school. This has included work with children and young people, parents and carer and wider partnerships.
- 4.8 In order to enable the project to work in all schools and to put in place practical responses to the challenges identified in the research, the Cost of the School Day project received a further year's funding through Scottish Attainment Challenge funding. This has enabled schools to build on the momentum achieved in the first phase of this initiative and follow through on the range of activities already underway through the Pupil Equity Fund. Schools have now worked on a Cost of the School Day Action Plan. Last session support was offered through Practice Network Meetings and a series of shared practice documents are being produced (see appendix 1). Support from the Cost of the School Day project is continuing at school cluster level.
- 4.9 The coordinated city-wide approach to Cost of the School Day in Dundee has meant widespread awareness of the issues. Project evidence has influenced local authority policy. In October 2018, responding to the work of the project team, Dundee City Council launched four bold Cost of the School Day statements of intent, proposing that:
- No child or young person in Dundee will start school without a breakfast
  - No child in Dundee will miss out on their Primary 7 residential trip due to cost
  - All schools will develop a Cost of the School Day action plan by the end of session 2018/2019
  - All children and young people in Dundee schools will have access to an affordable school uniform
- 4.10 There have been numerous policy and practice changes in schools across the city. Examples from school action plans include cheaper uniform suppliers, more inclusive homework policies, greater consistency in lending resources, breakfast provision, free 'ready to learn' packs, non-stigmatising approaches to fundraising, trip subsidies, improved promotion of financial entitlements and many more.
- 4.11 Children and Families Service, working in partnership with Active Schools has made a further commitment to children and their families to remove costs by ensuring that all extra-curricular sport activities in school are delivered free-of-charge before 5 pm from the start of session 2020/2021.
- 4.12 At the start of session 2019/20 all Head Teachers delivered a presentation, prepared by the Cost of The School Day Support Officers, highlighting the extent of child poverty in Dundee

and reminding all staff of the importance of reducing the costs associated to school for families.

- 4.13 The Child Poverty Action Group have recently highlighted the ongoing work in Dundee schools by producing a short film featuring the staff and pupils at Morgan Academy showing the work they have done to reduce the cost associated with school uniforms. (see appendix 2)

## 5.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 This report has been subject to an assessment of any impacts on Equality and Diversity, Fairness and Poverty, Environment and Corporate Risk. There are no major issues.

## 6.0 **CONSULTATIONS**

- 6.1 The Council Management Team and members of the COSD project steering group have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

## 7.0 **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1 None.

Paul Clancy, Executive Director

November 2019



# Shared Practice – Uniform

To help you to make Cost of the School Day changes in your school community, this document details some of the actions and activities related to the cost of providing children with school uniforms. This not an exhaustive list, but gives examples of what schools are doing to ease the pressure on families of dealing with one of the highest costs associated with school. Each of these approaches appeared in Cost of the School Day actions plans submitted to Dundee City Council, and show that there is an abundance of good practice in schools across the city.

**“All children and young people in Dundee schools will have access to an affordable school uniform”** is one of DCC’s statements of intent, and Dundee schools have already worked hard to support this. Here you’ll find information which could further enhance your practice.

## Primary schools

**Promotion of financial entitlements** – helping families to apply for financial assistance in the form of The School Clothing Grant, and The Best Start Grant.

Raising awareness:

- Make information about financial entitlements available at all transition stages - P1, P7 and P3 for FME.
- Continued promotion through a diverse range of networks or channels, for example: links to the application form on website, app, twitter, text, newsletters, signs around the school and at office window, and reminders home.
- Ensure information is available at Parent Evenings, open events and school shows.
- Ensure if GIRFEC concerns are raised regarding clothing, contact families to let them know about The School Clothing Grant.
- Promote the Best Start Grant.

Help with the application process:

- Make sure all parents can access IT support to complete online forms.
- Advertise a drop in morning for parents and carers to come and complete the school clothing grant application with the SFDW.
- Ensure translated versions of promotion to families.
- If there has been literacy difficulties identified within families, provide support to fill out application forms.
- Partnerships with Nursery to support children in transition with uniform.

**Unbadged uniform options** – a great, stigma free action which also reduces costs.

- Provide information about low cost school uniform, and make sure parents are aware that no badge is required.
- Encourage families to buy school uniform from supermarkets.
- Discourage the use of designer brands.
- School gym shoes to be black plimsoles only.
- Parent Council to help source uniform options.

**Using PEF:**

- Schools have made use of PEF funding to purchase gym kits and shoes to be kept in school. One school has purchased gym bags, plimsoles, shorts and t-shirts for whole school body to ensure all have the same kit, to reduce stigma around brands.

**Referring to other agencies or applying for funding**

- Make referrals to Caring for Kids.
- SFDW can assist parents to apply for winter coats and other clothing items from Tay FM or Caring for Kids.

### **Recycle & re-use**

- One school has a Zero Waste Wednesday, where Parent Council from both campuses run school uniform SWAP shops with an 'Eco' focus.
- Several schools wash clothes, bag them and have them at the front door for reusing.
- School uniform and clothing exchange run by parents within the school.
- Clothes set out at parent's night for families to take. This can be presented as an eco/recycling project.
- Seniors encouraged to donate blazers, ties and other uniform back to the school when they leave.
- Parent-run thrift shop regularly held after school with a 'take what you need' attitude, which is supported by SFDW.
- In one school, any lost property which hasn't been claimed for a month is laundered and recycled. This is offered to families throughout the school year at various events.
- A swap shop has been incorporated into 'Breakfast and a Blether', to promote upcycling and re-use of lost property from school.
- One cluster has a bi-annual "pop up shop" in the local area.
- Letters are sent out to parents before the end of term, asking for donations of gym kits that can be washed and recycled for children the following year.
- Some schools have created clothing banks and encourage parents to access them.
- Low cost 'good as new' stall at school fair.
- Recycle lost property and encourage - a 'bring and take' bundle for growing children.
- 'Good as new' stall at local church foodbank in case parents not keen to access in school.

### **Provision of uniform items**

- Provide school clothing for parents if they are having to replenish school clothes.
- Identify those not taking part in gym. Discuss the barriers to taking part, and if the problem is related to low family income, provide kit for these pupils.
- Buy in a supply of uniform and ask for donations from families and leavers.
- Spare gym kits for every classroom.
- All P1 and new pupils will be provided with a school tie, pencil case, stationery and water bottle.
- Continue to seek support from Parent Council to provide P1 ties and P7 senior sweatshirts.

### Secondary schools

There are lots of actions and approaches in the Primary Schools section of this document, which might also work well in Secondary schools. Here you'll find further approaches that have been taken in Secondary schools.

### **Promotion of financial entitlements.**

- Ongoing and diversified promotion - link to form on website, twitter, text reminders home. Continue to include details in school handbook.
- Provide support on the school website.
- Liaise with cluster primaries to see how they support families in applying for grants.

### **Recycle & re-use**

- 'Good as New' low cost/swap shop available at specific points in the term.
- Monthly Feel Good Friday Swap Shop for uniform/casual clothes.
- Senior pupils donate their blazers and these are distributed by House Heads as and when required.
- One school intends to extend blazer recycling to include all types of school uniform and PE kit.
- Stalls at transition events and contact evenings selling uniform.
- One school is hoping to implement a Pop-Up shop for the Sixth Year Dance, possibly led by Senior pupils.

- Continue to monitor Lost & Found stocks and be open to any re-use and recycle suggestions relating to uniform.

**Using PEF**

- Uniform available from Guidance teachers if pupils present at school not appropriately dressed, funded by PEF.

**Provision of uniform items**

- Have accessible uniform throughout the school year and make young people and families aware of this.
- Uniform amnesty at key points in the session.

**Develop school policy**

- Create a short-life working group to consult staff and write a uniform policy.
- Write a detailed school policy that is disseminated to staff, pupils and parents.

If you would like any more information on anything you've read here, you can get in touch with Fiona Kelbie, the Cost of the School Day Dundee Project Worker at [fkelbie@cpagscotland.org.uk](mailto:fkelbie@cpagscotland.org.uk)



The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the Digital Dundee Learning Hub website. The URL in the address bar is <http://ddl.ea.dundee.city.sch.uk/news/morgan-academy-cost-of-the-school-day-video-resource-launched-nationally>. The website header includes the Digital Dundee Learning Hub logo and navigation links: Home, Dundee City, GDPR, Forms Library, ICT, Curricular Resources, Google, iNotes, and Glow. A breadcrumb trail indicates the current page: Home / News / Morgan Academy Cost of the School Day Video Resource Launched Nationally.

The main content area features the article title: **Morgan Academy Cost of the School Day Video Resource Launched Nationally**. The text reads: "School uniform can be expensive, and providing everything their children need can put pressure on lower income families. The staff at Morgan Academy in Dundee have shown that it doesn't have to overwhelm families who are struggling." It continues: "Morgan Academy has been working hard to reduce the cost of the school day and promote equality across their school. Find out how this #DundeeLearningHub has changed its uniform policy and set up a uniform bank to take the pressure off young people and their parents." A link is provided: "The video can be viewed by clicking here."

Below the text is a video player with the title "THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY" and subtitle "SCHOOLS TAKING ACTION ON... Uniforms at Morgan Academy, Dundee". The video player shows a thumbnail with the text "THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT" and "Free".

On the right side, there is a "News" sidebar with a list of recent articles:

- Morgan Academy Cost of the School Day Video Resource Launched Nationally (Nov 13, 2019)
- Cafe Science Dundee: What's Happening to our Rainforests? with Dr Mark Cutler, University of Dundee (Oct 23, 2019)
- Dundee Arts Café: Solving Environmental Issues Together with Prof Mel Woods, University of Dundee (Oct 23, 2019)
- Important information about your Pension (Oct 21, 2019)
- Active Girls Day Colourama Run 2019 (Sep 17, 2019)

The browser's taskbar at the bottom shows the Windows logo, a folder icon, and two open applications: "Morgan Academy..." and "Document Overvi...". The search bar at the bottom right of the page contains the text "Search" and a magnifying glass icon.

<http://ddl.ea.dundee.city.sch.uk/news/morgan-academy-cost-of-the-school-day-video-resource-launched-nationally>

