

REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 25 FEBRUARY 2016

REPORT ON: SCHOOL CLOTHING GRANTS

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE

REPORT NO: 68-2016

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report seeks approval to increase the current allowance for school clothing grants.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the school clothing grant be increased from session 2016/17 to £81 for primary children from P1-7 and secondary aged children up to the statutory school leaving age.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 This change would have additional costs of £207,681 per session based on the current level up uptake of the clothing grant.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

4.1 The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 gives the education authority a duty to make provision for the clothing of pupils who would, otherwise, be unable to take full advantage of the education provided at schools under its management. There is no set amount prescribed in the Act or guidelines as to how this provision is to be met. This has traditionally been done in Scotland through school clothing grants.

4.2 Children attending a Dundee school from P1 to P7 and S1 to S4 may be entitled to a School Clothing Grant. Pupils placed by Dundee City Council at special education provision out with the authority are also the council's responsibility.

4.3 Families in receipt of the following benefits who submit a completed application form automatically receive a clothing grant for each pupil of school age:

- Income Support,
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance – JSA(IB)
- Income Related Employment and Support Allowance – ESA(IR)
- Universal Credit
- Support under Part IV of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Housing Benefit
- Council Tax Reduction
- Child Tax Credit with an income of less than £16,105 (as assessed by HMRC)

The current grants are £45 for each primary school aged pupil and £50 for pupils of secondary school age.

4.4 Pupils who stay on at school after the statutory school leaving age in Scotland do not qualify for a school clothing grant. However senior pupils who qualify for Education Maintenance Allowance receive funding throughout the year and this can, as required, be used for the purchase of school clothing.

4.5 This increase in payment will contribute greatly towards the realistic cost of school uniform purchase in a climate where the vast majority of schools have become more prescriptive over the specificities of uniform required particularly where school blazers are now encouraged strongly from S1 onwards.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Although no formal equalities screening has been carried out, this increase will certainly benefit positively those families with the greatest need in the city.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

6.1 The Chief Executive and Executive Director of Corporate Services have been consulted in the compilation of this Report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

Michael Wood
Executive Director

February 2016