

**Halfmerke Primary School**

**Cost of the School Day Policy**

At **Halfmerke Primary School,** we recognise the need to reduce the Cost of the School Day for all our pupils and particularly for our pupils who are already experiencing poverty. We examine the School Day through the following headings: Uniform, Travel, Learning, Pupil & Partner Voice, Period Poverty School trips, Eating, Fun, and Extracurricular.

We will:

* Remove barriers to participation and learning for children living in low-income households.
* Always act with dignity and respect.
* Consult with our families about costs and how they are managed.
* Reduce cost pressures on family incomes.
* Consider best use of Pupil Equity Funding to ensure financial barriers are reduced or removed.
* Look for creative and sustainable ways to reduce the Cost of the School Day.

**Child Poverty Act (2017) and UNCRC**

The Child Poverty Act (2017) places a legal obligation upon and sets statutory targets for the Scottish Government to significantly reduce the number of children experiencing poverty in Scotland by 2030. This means that the Government and local authorities are legally bound to tell us what the child poverty targets are for Scotland, and how the Scottish Government and councils will meet them.

The UNCRC Bill was passed in Scottish Parliament on the 7th of December 2023, and it became law in July 2024. Halfmerke Primary is committed to becoming a Rights Respecting School, and we aim to ensure that all pupils have the right to an education which develops their personality, talents and abilities (UNCRC Article 29). We also aim to ensure that we listen to our children and ensure their voices are heard (Article 12) through consultation opportunities.

**COSD in Action at Halfmerke Primary School**

Halfmerke Primary School will review our cost of the school day through the following lenses:

* Uniform/Clothing
* Travel
* Learning
* Pupil & Partner Voice
* Period Poverty
* Trips
* Food
* Fun Events
* Extracurricular
* Attitudes
* Supporting the Unexpected

**Uniform**

Our uniform is grey skirt or grey trousers red polo shirt and red sweatshirt / jumper / cardigan or a white shirt and tie. Families can purchase uniforms with the school logo from <https://www.academyuniformsltd.co.uk/>

We **do not** insist on badged sweatshirts/poloshirts, therefore, parents are able to choose their preferred and most affordable uniform supplier, including local supermarkets.

We also have a wide range of preloved uniforms and footwear available, and parents/carers or members of our local community can take what they need from our rail at our school entrance. The school openly encourages the use of our preloved rail via newsletters to parents/carers. Additionally, the school understands that events happen in family life that result in children being unable to wear school uniform. Additionally, if a family is unable to provide a uniform, the school will support the family by providing a uniform for their child/ren. No child will miss out on an experience or education due to the clothes they are wearing.

Throughout the year, our preloved rail will also house Halloween costumes, winter jackets, Christmas jumpers, shoes, party clothes and summer clothes to provide a dignified and sustainable approach to supporting our families.

**Travel**

Most of our children travel to school by foot. The Local Authority provides transport for some of our pupils. We are aware that this could mean some children are not able to attend after school clubs and we therefore ensure that we have lunchtime activities as well as after school.

Where possible, we walk or utilise public transport for travel for school experiences. Where we must consider use of transport, we look for the most cost-effective options, such as the community bus, and try to share transport with our local schools where possible.

**Learning**

Children at Halfmerke Primarydo not need to pay for any core learning activity. All stationary is provided, and young people do not need to bring their own equipment. We also provide all learning materials required for tasks in school and try hard to encourage a sustainable approach to using materials.

**Pupil and Partner Voice**

We work hard to ensure that all our children and families voices are heard. We regularly consult with our families over the cost of the school day and listen carefully to their responses. We ensure that we inform our children of the impact of how we participate in events across the school and consult them on the decisions made. Where possible, we make use of community fundraising and grant opportunities so that we are mindful of the impact on our families.

**Period Poverty**

Under the Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021 local authorities and education providers are legally required to make period products available free of charge, as and when they are required. Products must be easily obtained, in a way that respects people’s dignity, and a range of products must be made available. At Halfmerke Primary School, we provide free sanitary products for our young people. Sanitary products are provided in the toilets, and we regularly remind our young people where they can access the products.

**School Trips**

Trips are planned each year by class teachers to consolidate interdisciplinary work within the class. The average cost of trips for pupils is £5-7. Our Parent Council supports the provision of trips by reducing the cost by subsidising the cost to families. We have an informal policy to support families of multiple children, where they pay a reduced cost for trips. No child is ever removed or denied an experience because of a financial barrier.

We participate in a wide range of sporting activities promoted by South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture and our Active Schools Coordinator. We also attend competitions and events in our Learning Community and SLC. We do not charge for attendance or transport to these activities.

We do not charge our P7 pupils for any transition visits to secondary school. We work closely with our families to ensure that poverty is not a barrier to pupils’ participation in residential excursions. We make every effort to ensure that all excursions are accessible for all children and consider the needs of individual family circumstances. We allow residential trips to be paid up and look for cost saving measures such as sharing the residential with Learning Community Schools to reduce cost and transport and undertaking P7 community fundraising.

**Eating at school**

Last school year we had 26 % of pupils who were in receipt of Free School Meals. We are aware that there may be a stigma associated with a free lunch, the introduction of ParentPay has helped to reduce this as well as our pre order system where all pupils ordering a lunch are given a band depicting a colour of their chosen meal. No difference is made at point of ordering or at point of delivery of the chosen meal. We estimate that approximately 72% of pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals take up their entitlement. We offer a free breakfast club for all our pupils. We estimate that 25% of pupils eligible for FME take up this offer. In addition, we offer daily fruit for any children or staff who wish to partake. This has become part of our ethos and expectation within Halfmerke and does not carry any stigma. Whenever there is a food incentive or event within school, there is no cost to pupils.

**Fun Events**

Halfmerke Primary School recognise that events planned for enjoyment can actually put added pressure on to families. We look carefully at attendance and participation in these events to see if there are any poverty-related patterns that require action. As with school trips, our Fun Events are planned by our staff team often in consultation with the children, we ensure events are even spaced throughout the session and that fun events do not incur any cost to the pupils. We currently limit our fund-raising events to one or two per year.

**Extracurricular**

At Halfmerke Primary,we have the following clubs netball, football, and athletics/ cross country, Dance, Musical Theatre and STEM. Currently, all our extra-curricular clubs have no cost. We currently do not insist on any specialist kit for any of our extra-curricular activities. No child would be refused the opportunity to participate, due to lack of payment or equipment.

**Matters that arise**

At Halfmerke Primary School, we adopt a proactive approach to supporting our families and children who experience a negative change in financial circumstances.

We are very clear that the Cost of the School Day is an area that requires constant vigilance and will not be ‘fixed’ by any one action. Our improvement planning continues to focus enhancing our approaches to ensure barriers to participation and engagement in the wider life of the school are reduced for all pupils and we will:

* continue to ensure pupils do not pay for any core learning activities or resources.
* raise awareness of COSD through the Parent Council and newsletters.
* build on our positive relationships with our families to ensure that all those who should receive a free school meal take up their entitlement and if they are needing support through the community wellbeing team.
* continue to subsidise school trips, sporting activities, residential excursions and other out of school events.
* Further reduce the cost of school trips by looking for more opportunities within the local area and alternative transport provision.
* gather the views of our pupils and families on the Cost of the School Day and involve them in decision making i.e. PEF and Participatory Budgeting.
* investigate funding opportunities to support the cost of extra-curricular experiences.
* work in partnership with our Parent Council to identify ways in which families who are struggling may be supported.

**Updated: December 2024**

**Review Date: December 2025**