Saint Vincent’s Primary School

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Cost of a School Day Policy

**Cost of a School Day**

Saint Vincent’s Primary is committed to ensuring all our pupils have as rich a learning experience as possible and aim to ensure that financial concerns are addressed and no child misses out because of poverty. As a school we form very valuable connections in the community and beyond which often help us to offer quality opportunities for our children at significantly reduced and subsidised rates.

We work to meet the key recommendations that the Poverty Action Group research has noted as being important markers from supporting children from a low-income background including :

* Working with organisations in the community to address and alleviate poverty e.g. Saint Vincent de Paul, Cash for kids,
* Ensuring as far as possible an ‘affordable school year’- spacing events out to try to avoid hotspots leading to increasing financial pressures.
* Fundraising activities which do not always ask families to contribute
* Lending resources without trouble and helping families discreetly.
* Modifying expectations and tasks; offering/ providing support to access IT
* Having consistent expectations and practice between staff members on uniform, resources etc
* Rewards and merits unaffected by issues relating to finances at home
* Greater poverty awareness among children
* Making sure families get financial entitlements- clothing grants, free meals.
* Staff discretion and empathy
* Ensuring costs for trips are affordable
* Covering costs/ subsidising and supporting discounts where possible
* Systems in place where pupils/ parents/ carers do not feel embarrassed asking for help.

In general, school costs can be broken down into several key categories:

* Clothing grant and buying uniforms
* Fundraising events
* School trips
* School clubs
* Home learning

These categories and what we do to support children and families are detailed overleaf. However, our ‘*attitude to poverty’* is a common thread in each of the categories. Many teachers, children and parents are aware of poverty and try to be sensitive to the challenges that low-income families face.

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Description automatically generated with medium confidenceAs a school we pride ourselves on the inclusive ethos and positive engagement that exists between staff and pupils and between pupils at all levels of school life. It is with a strong degree of pride that- although like all schools we deal on a regular basis with friendship fall outs and picking up the pieces over social media conversations outside of school that have led to arguments etc.- we very rarely have to deal with any individual issues where a pupil is bullied or discriminated on the basis of conversations about money and wealth.

**Clothing grant and buying uniforms**

Parents on certain benefits can access a clothing grant to help with school uniform costs. SLC grant is currently £50. Two letters each academic year are issued to inform parents regarding information about entitlement to clothing grants and how to apply which is also available on school and SLC website.

Other support available:

* School Uniform Bank
* Parent Council and SVDP support

Families who need support are encouraged to speak to the school.

**Fundraising Events**

All our fund-raising activities take place during the school day- we have one dedicated school fund- raising event in September the very popular Danceathon where pupils contribute what they can and there is a strong tradition in the school of families supporting this through sponsorship.

**School Trips**

We aim to reduce costs of school trips by subsidising with school funds or Parent Council support. For longer trips we give maximum advance notice and put a staged payment plan in place.

Families who need support are encouraged to speak to the school. **No child** will ever not be given the opportunity due to financial restraints.



**School Clubs**

We offer a range of lunchtime and after-school clubs, most of which are free or at low cost. These clubs are a valuable resource for children, making new interests and experiences accessible to them.

However, small costs can still stand in the way of participation.

If a pupil feels that there is a reason that they cannot participate because of the lack of a resource/ equipment this should not prove a barrier to involvement and the pupil or parent should approach a member of staff and allow us to identify a solution.

**Home Learning**

Although most home learning tasks have little or no costs, there are exceptions that can create difficulties for children from low income households

e.g. craft projects and homework that requires computers, online access, software and printers. We offer:

* Online and printer access in school if needed
* Range of Family Learning activities at no cost
* Tailored individual support if required

We encourage parents/ carers to speak to the school if they have any specific concerns to allow us to identify areas to support pupil engagement.

**Eating at School**

Food costs can be significant and receiving Free School Meals can help. However not every family entitled to free meals applies for them and not every child receiving free meals takes them. Two letters each academic year are issued to inform parents regarding information about entitlement to Free School Meals and how to apply. Also available on school and SLC website.

We also offer:

* Free Nurture Breakfast
* Snacks given on need basis and 20p Tuck shop open to all each day
* Foodbank and SVDP referral