



October 2017

The Cost of the School Day

We are committed to ensuring that every child at Priorsford has equal access to all opportunities available to them, regardless of financial position.

With support from the PTA, we have set up a group looking at reducing the cost of the school day and ensure that all our children have access to resources and activities which cost money. Our discussions have been based on the City of Edinburgh's report '*1 in 5 - Raising Awareness of Child Poverty*,' and '*The Cost of the School Day*' from the Child Poverty Action Group, which recognise that more than 1 in 5 children across Scotland are officially recognised as living in poverty. In addition, 7 out of 10 children living in relative poverty are in working households.

It is important that every family is aware of the support that our school and external agencies can provide and therefore this letter provides details of some of the support available. Our group hopes to have access to an 'Inclusion Fund,' a small amount of money from the PTA funds raised for the school, to support some of the proposals mentioned below. The group has met once and will meet again as we review and improve our support, based on your feedback. Please contact the school if you feel there are other ways we can support families at Priorsford - we are keen to hear your ideas.

Pre-Loved School Uniform

We always have a large amount of un-named lost property and donated items of school clothing. We will now have a rail with a small amount of clothes available outside the school office at all times and the PTA will also bring a larger selection of clothing out into the atrium at 12.30pm on the first Friday of every month. Please take what you need and leave a donation in the donations box if you wish.

If a child regularly comes to school without uniform, we can provide sweatshirts or polo shirts for them.

PE Kit

We have a box of various sizes of shorts, t-shirts and some gym shoes available in the atrium. Staff will help find gym kit for children so that they can take part in PE with appropriate and safe clothing.

Swimming

All classes from P3-P6 take part in a block of swimming during the school year. We will be asking parents for donations of swimsuits, trunks, towels, bags and goggles so that any child who can't bring these items for swimming will be able to take part.

Food and Snack

Mrs Stenhouse, our school cook, can provide fruit for children who have not been able to bring snack for break times. In addition, staff keep a close eye on children when they come into school in the morning and are aware that, for whatever reason, some come to school hungry. The school has a supply of breakfast cereal and we can provide breakfast for any child who needs it.

We are aware that it can be difficult for parents to meet the cost of nursery snack. If this is the case, please speak in confidence to one of the nursery staff who can support you with this.

Trips and Activities

We are currently looking at how we can support families most in need of financial help to ensure that no child misses out on trips or activities because the cost is prohibitive.

Through discussion with the PTA, we have made the decision not to book a theatre group to come to Priorsford this Christmas. We appreciate this may be disappointing for some, therefore we would like your feedback on this decision. We will look at alternative sources of entertainment for the children at Christmas.

For pupils going to Dalguise in P7 (costing £300 per child), we have access to charity funding - Borders Children's Charity are a super support - so please contact the school as soon as possible if you know that the cost of Dalguise will be prohibitive for you. We will also start to gather kit such as waterproofs and boots for the children to take with them.

Claiming Benefit

The underclaiming of benefits available to families is a huge factor in child poverty. We are hoping to have the Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) at our parent consultation evenings in November. Please speak with them, either at school or contact them directly (01721 721722) to check that you are claiming the benefits you are entitled to.

In addition, our school receives Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to help close the poverty-related attainment gap for specific pupils. Our PEF allocation is based on the number of families claiming free meals and clothing grants - please make sure you claim the benefits available to you as this will ensure the school receives the correct amount of PEF and enable us to provide additional support to benefit individual pupils.

Our group will be meeting again to consider other aspects of the school day - accessing resources in the classroom; costs of class trips; access to the internet and computers to support home learning; access to clubs as well as reviewing our charity/fund-raising events. If you think there are any other areas which the school should consider, please email your ideas to : sandra.macgregor@scotborders.gov.uk

We look forward to your feedback and ideas.