



THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY



More than one in four (260,000) children are currently living in poverty in Scotland and the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) forecasts an increase of more than 50% in the proportion of children living in poverty in the UK by 2020/21. We all know that poverty is by its nature often dynamic and people move in and out of poverty-there are short term, recurrent and persistent states of poverty depending on individual and family circumstances. Increasing numbers of families across Scotland are struggling financially.

The Child Poverty Action Group recently commissioned and produced some support materials, entitled **The Cost of the School Day** to assist schools and school Parent Councils with ideas to alleviate some of these concerns. While it is clear that issues surrounding the ways to tackle poverty are societal, not just related to school, it is clear we have our own part to play in working to alleviate some of the issues faced by pupils and parents who are confronted with the often daily dilemmas of providing support for their child's school experience.

"Children who are unable to participate in the same activities as their peers will very often not feel included and this can have a negative impact on health and wellbeing. The key is finding possible solutions to ensure all children have the same opportunities."

What the reading of the research has reinforced is that as a school we need to raise awareness of the supports we offer to parents and pupils, while at the same time observing the required confidentiality required when any parent or pupil requests assistance.

If we want to tackle poverty, every child from a low income household must be able to make the most of the school day.

At Spittal Primary School and Nursery Class, we recognise the need to reduce the Cost of the School Day for all of our pupils and particularly for our pupils who are already experiencing poverty. When planning our annual calendar and our learning experiences, we will ensure that costs are kept to a realistic minimum and be aware of financial implications for our families.

We encourage families who may experience financial difficulty, which impacts on their child's learning to speak in confidence with a member of Senior Leadership Team or a teacher who they feel comfortable in speaking to, in order that we can support the child and remove any barriers to learning.