

NOTICE OF MOTION**IMPACT OF SCHOOL COSTS ON FAMILIES**

"Every child in Britain has the right to a free, state education, yet for many families meeting the costs of school uniform, school trips and specialist equipment poses a real challenge that can contribute to debt and financial hardship.

This council seeks to play its part in ensuring that financial help and advice available to families in relation to the broader costs of attending school are effectively communicated and recognises that a child's confidence and ability to learn can be affected by their not having the same opportunities as others due to an inability to pay.

This council notes that:

- Latest figures published by the Campaign to End Child Poverty a coalition of charities and campaign groups including Save the Children and the TUC show that 50 per cent of children in Brighton Kemptown, 39 per cent of children in Hove and 37 per cent of children are living in poverty.
- In a 2007 survey of parents undertaken by the Schools Costs Coalition, 3/4 of parents of secondary school children and 2/3 of parents of primary school children found it difficult to meet the costs of school uniforms and school trips.
- There is a lack of knowledge about available financial assistance.
- There is widespread concern that the children of families unable to meet these costs are more likely to suffer bullying and to be disciplined as a result.
- That the Government's new Admissions Code to be implemented in September 2008 does, for the first time, make clear the importance of limiting the cost of school uniform and school trips.

This council therefore resolves to:

- Give its support to the 'Adding up' campaign led by the Citizen's Advice Bureau that highlights the range and impact of school costs on families and gives guidance to schools on how those costs can be mitigated.
- Instruct the Chief Executive of Brighton & Hove City Council to write to the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families urging him to:
- Ensure the Government keeps its 1999 promise to half child poverty levels by 2010 and eradicates child poverty from the UK by 2020.

- Accept the requests in Early Day Motion 1234 from John Battle MP that a statutory duty is placed on local authorities to provide uniform grants for families in receipt of maximum child tax credit.
- For the Government to identify a budget for the provision of standardised school uniform and school trip grants to Local Authorities.
- Consider making the school costs requirements of the new Admissions Code enforceable via the Schools Adjudicator who should have the power to investigate on behalf of parents.
- Calls on the Cabinet Member for Children & Young People to give consideration to bringing forward a report to an early meeting of the Children & Young People's Trust Board setting out the council's approach to working with schools to ensure that families are informed of support available, how the LEA will achieve compliance with the new Admissions Code in relation to keeping school costs low and explores the provision of an appropriate sum within the 2009/2010 budget for the LEA to use as grant funding in this regard."