

Government to make music lessons free for the next year

There will be no fees next year for children learning a musical instrument at school thanks to more than £7 million funding from The Scottish Government.

Councils will also receive £6 million to waive core curriculum charges which can be levied on families for things including materials for home economics or theatre trips associated with drama qualifications.

Core curriculum means “classroom-based activity within the eight core curriculum areas in the broad general education in primary and secondary school plus activity associated with preparation for SQA qualifications in the senior phase”.

The agreement with COSLA covers the 2021-22 academic year and marks the delivery of two further commitments for the first 100 days of the newly elected government.

Education Secretary Shirley-Anne Somerville said: “My priority is to ensure the best possible outcomes for all of Scotland’s children and young people, whatever their background. All children should have the best start in life and the ability to take part in core elements of education should never be limited by a child’s ability to pay.

“Today’s announcement means families will not see bills for

musical tuition or core curriculum activities in the new school year. I will continue to work with COSLA and local authorities to develop a sustainable and funded model for future years.”

COSLA Children and Young People spokesperson Councillor Stephen McCabe, said: “Councils recognise the importance of instrumental music tuition for the learning and development of our children and young people. Where fees were in place for tuition this is due to a range of local pressures on core council budgets. The one year funding package agreed between COSLA Leaders and Scottish Government will allow for the removal of fees in the coming academic year and the maintenance of existing levels of provision, so that fees and charges are not a barrier to learning an instrument.

“We welcome the commitment from the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills to work with COSLA and partners in the sector to consider the intent, impact, and broader implications of this Scottish Government policy intervention and to develop a model for the long-term sustainability of instrumental music tuition services across Scotland which must include sustainable funding arrangements for all councils.”