

Report reveals iPad inequality in Edinburgh schools

Parents at almost a quarter of Edinburgh schools are being charged £150 for repairs to broken iPads, it has emerged, despite other city schools replacing the devices for free.

Education chiefs have said more work needs to be done to tackle inequality across the city when it comes to the cost of keeping iPads working.

A report to Edinburgh City Council's education, children and families committee revealed that half of schools carry out repairs to iPads for free while half charge families.

And it revealed that 59% of schools replace broken iPads for free while 23% ask for the full cost of £150 from parents with the rest asking for a reduced amount.

Jackie Reid, head of education, said schools had the discretion to reduce costs for families depending on circumstances.

The Home School Agreement states: "Depending on circumstances, parents/carers agree to pay a contribution towards any damage to or loss of the iPad. This contribution will be 50% of the cost for the first incident and 100% for any further incidents, up to a maximum of £150".

A survey of schools revealed the split in approaches raising questions from Councillor Steve Burgess who said: "There is quite a disparity between schools about asking for contributions to repair and replace iPads.

"£150 is going to be quite onerous for some of our families."

Ms Reid told the committee that schools could decide charges based on their knowledge of individual families in their communities.

She said: "There is some work to be done to ensure we have equality across the estate."

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter