

Schools in England using Airbnb-style strategy to raise funds

Level 2: Intermediate

1 Warmer

a. Answer the questions.

1. Have you raised money for something? What was it for?
2. Do you think schools have enough money? Why (not)?
3. What are some ways schools can make extra money?

2 Key words

a. Write the correct words from the wordpool to match the definitions below. Then, find and highlight them in the article to read them in context.

administration advertise budget commercial generate host
income letting fee protest relief special needs venue

1. the amount of money needed to rent a house or other place _____
2. tell people about a product or service to sell it _____
3. produce or create something _____
4. describes something to do with buying and selling products and services _____
5. particular needs that a person has because of a difference in how they learn or the help they need to learn _____
6. the amount of money available to a person or organisation and a plan for how it will be spent over some time, e.g., a month or a year _____
7. complain or show you disagree with something, especially publicly and usually as a group

8. provide the space and other things necessary for a special event _____
9. money earned from doing work or investing _____
10. a feeling of happiness when something unpleasant stops or does not happen

11. the place where an event or meeting happens _____
12. all of the tasks and activities done to plan and run a business, school, or other organisation

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b. Complete the sentences with words from the previous activity. You might have to change the form of the word.

1. Which country is _____ the next Olympics?
2. The average global household _____ is about \$12,000.
3. She felt such _____ when she found a new job that paid well.
4. The _____ for holiday homes can be high, especially in summer.
5. People were _____ against the war outside the embassy yesterday.
6. If a company doesn't _____, no one will know about their products and services.
7. The couple went to look at different _____ for their wedding.
8. It's helpful to make a monthly _____ so you know how much you can spend.

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- 1 Schools are using Airbnb-type services to raise money, renting out spaces from classrooms to canteens, holding puppy training in their car parks and wrestling competitions in their gyms.
- 2 One state school, which did not give its name, said it raised over £700,000 in letting fees last year.
- 3 Wyvil Primary School in Vauxhall, south-west London, rents out its "light-filled white corridor" for photo shoots. New Rickstones Academy in Witham, Essex, is offering its beauty room to anyone who wants "a high-quality hair and beauty salon". Stroud Green School in east London is offering a "well-lit" hall for "music, dance or theatre rehearsals, or film/photoshoots."
- 4 Schools typically advertise through a range of dedicated online sites. One primary school in Brent that uses the Sharesy platform has generated £21,800 so far this year and expects to exceed £25,000 by the end of 2023.
- 5 "Schools aren't naturally commercial, but they're having to think of additional revenue streams and are becoming increasingly innovative," said Felix Atkin, founder and CEO of Sharesy.
- 6 "We have special-needs schools with sensory rooms and soft-play areas: these are particularly popular to rent out for children's parties and can generate up to £300 a party," he said. "We also have schools that rent out their car parks at the weekends for puppy training and food markets."
- 7 In October, in England, budgets were cut even further after the government cut £370 million from money they had been promised in July.
- 8 Concerns have been raised, and some communities have protested after their local schools started selling advertising space inside and on the sides of their buildings.
- 9 Brandon Bennett from School Space said schools were hosting an increasingly wide range of after-hours activities. "School Space and our partner, Tutti Space, target creators – people doing music videos, interviews, film and photo shoots, recordings, performances," he said. "The film and TV industry particularly is always looking for interesting spaces that match the script they're working on, from weekend markets to wrestling events."
- 10 Average yearly incomes for schools on School Space's platform is £88,800, with their biggest school earner making £228,199 in lettings booked this year. "We see an average increase in income of 170 per cent in the first six months of handling lettings for schools," he said.
- 11 "If a school is big enough, it can make money both by installing solar panels and through the profits that come through as additional income," said Ann Flaherty, the director of Solar for Schools. "Schools massively welcome the relief this gives their finances. They tell me they spend the money on stationery and books."
- 12 Renting out school car parks on sites such as YourParkingSpace and JustPark is another popular option: many schools take advantage of how close they are to sporting and entertainment venues to offer space during weekends. One further education college in Oxford charges less than the council and shopping centre for parking at weekends.
- 13 Charlie Gothold from SchoolHire said that schools were able to charge less because "any extra money they can raise is a plus".
- 14 Gothold said that the only limit is the schools' ability to have enough staff to handle the administration and be on site when the bookings take place. "Schools have to have the staff to cope with what is like a business: they need someone doing the admin, and someone has to be there to open and close the premises and make sure the people renting the space are behaving," he said.

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3 Comprehension check

a. Answer the questions using information from the article.

1. What are schools in the UK doing to raise money?
2. How much did the school that did not give its name raise last year?
3. What is the name of the platform mentioned in the article?
4. Which two areas are trendy for children's parties?
5. How much were school budgets cut by in October?
6. What happened when schools started selling advertising space?
7. What industry is "always looking for interesting spaces"?
8. What is the school's average yearly income on the School Space platform?
9. According to Ann Flaherty, what do schools spend the money on?
10. What does Charlie Gothold say is the limit on a school's ability to let its space?

4 Key language

a. Read these quotes from the article. Change them into reported speech using *that*.

1. "Schools aren't naturally commercial, but they're having to think of additional revenue streams," said Felix Atkin, founder and CEO of Sharesy.
2. "We also have schools that rent out their car parks at the weekends for puppy training and food markets," said Atkin.
3. "We see an average increase in income of 170 per cent in the first six months of handling lettings for schools," said Brandon Bennett from School Space.
4. Charlie Gothold from SchoolHire said, "Schools have to have the staff to cope with what is like a business."

b. Choose two more quotes from the article. Rewrite them using reported speech with *that*.

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5 Discussion

a. Discuss these statements.

- “Schools must find more ways to get money.”
- “Renting out school space to the community is a good idea for the school and the community.”
- “When schools have to worry about money, they cannot focus on their students.”

6 In your own words

a. Do some research about strategies schools use to raise revenue.

- What kinds of fundraising are popular?
- Which one generates the most money for schools?
- Why do schools need to raise so much money?
- What effects do school budgets and fundraising have on the students?

b. Report your findings to the class and share your opinion. Here are some phrases to help you when you discuss the facts.

According to my research, ...

One example is ...

The reason(s) for this is / are ...

The effect(s) of this is / are ...

Another possibility is ...

Here are some phrases to use when stating your opinion.

I want to understand why ...

From my perspective, ...

In my understanding/opinion, ...

I (dis)agree with ...