Bellshill Cluster Poverty Proofing Statement

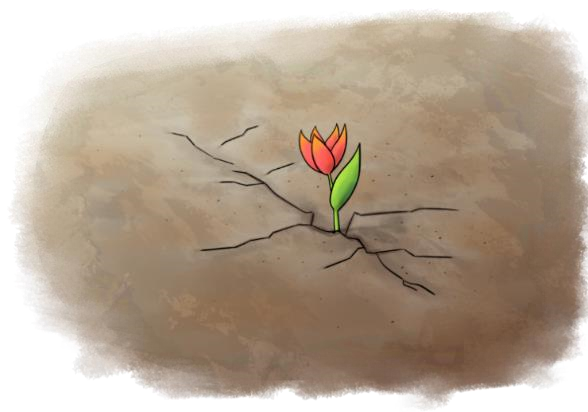


*Bellshill Academy Cluster Vision Statement is intended to help build a shared understanding of the impact of poverty and offers guidance to our children and young people, families and all staff in educational establishments*

Bellshill Academy Cluster consists of Bellshill Family Learning Centre, Lawmuir Primary, Tannochside Primary, Aitkenhead Primary, Noble Primary and Mossend Primary. All staff across the cluster work collaboratively to provide the best opportunities and outcomes for the pupils and their families. Our vision shows that we put our young people and our community at the heart of everything we do. From age 3-18 we aim to ensure that all pupils are achieving their full potential in school and develop the skills to live a happy, healthy and successful life.

By developing this position statement our cluster strives to remove the poverty barriers to education to ensure that all members feel included in our community in order to be successful.

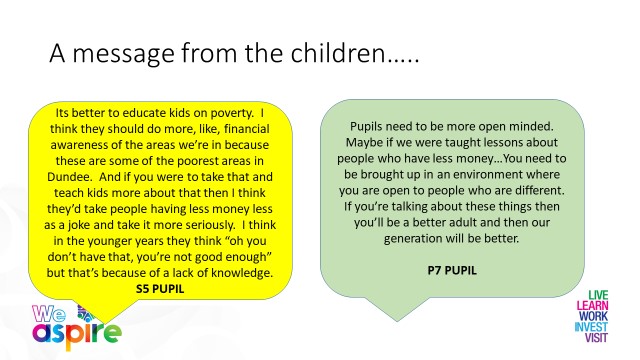
This policy was devised using [“The Cost of the School Day Toolkit”](https://cpag.org.uk/scotland/CoSD/toolkit)





*“Poverty means not being able to heat your home, pay your rent, or buy the essentials for your children. It means waking up every day facing insecurity, uncertainty and impossible decisions about money. It means facing marginalisation – and even discrimination – because of your financial circumstances. The constant stress it causes can lead to problems that deprive people of the chance to play a full part in society.”*

*Joseph Rowntree Foundation*



# Financial Support

North Lanarkshire Council is committed to tackling and reducing poverty.

School leaders can identify families who are living in poverty and refer them to the Financial Inclusion Team on the first instance, provided they have consented to share their information. The Financial Inclusion Team will advise families which options are available to them based on their personal circumstances. Any advice provided by the Financial Inclusion Team is confidential, free and impartial.

The Financial Inclusion Team can offer advice, representation and advocacy in a number of fields including:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Contact Details for Financial Support** | |
| **Financial**  **Inclusion**  **Team** | By telephone on 01698 332551    By email Fit@northlan.gov.uk |
| **Citizens**  **Advice**  **Scotland** | By telephone on 01236 754109 By email  bureau@Bellshillcab.casonline.org.uk |

* disability living allowance
* attendance allowance
* tax credits
* employment and support allowance
* income support
* jobseeker's allowance
* carer's allowance
* child benefit
* universal credit
* personal independence payment

**The Financial Inclusion Team also offer debt and money advice.**

|  |
| --- |
| **In particular times of crisis, schools can make one off referrals to Bellshill**  **Community Foodbank. 451 Main Street, Bellshill**  **This should be on the basis that families are then referred to the Financial Inclusion**  **Team to work on more long term support.** |

* Rent/mortgage arrears
* Council tax arrears
* Pay day loans
* Personal loans
* Store/credit cards
* Gas/electricity arrear
* Budgeting guidance

**Centres will also work with agencies around the school to promote their services supporting families living with the effects of poverty for long term support.**

## School Uniform



All schools within the cluster encourage young people to wear school uniform and feel proud to be part of the community. It helps promote inclusion and a sense of belonging. All our pupils are supported to make sure they are not in any way prejudiced. Schools actively promote applications for clothing grants and are always there to help and signpost support.

Communities Together was created in response to the needs of Bellshill, Mossend and Thorniewood Areas in North Lanarkshire against the backdrop of Coronavirus, As part of their service they launched a school uniform clothing bank that can help Bellshill families whose children attend Mossend Primary, St Gerard’s Primary, Sacred Heart Primary, Noble Primary, Holy Family Primary, Bellshill Academy or Cardinal Newman High School. They operate out of the YMCA in Bellshill Main Street, 9am -6pm Monday to Friday.

|  |
| --- |
| E mail:  contactus@communitiestogether.sc ot  [https://www.communitiestogether.sc](https://www.communitiestogether.scot/)  [ot/](https://www.communitiestogether.scot/)  01698 747483 |

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## Equipment and Resources

All students within the cluster are encouraged to ‘be ready’ for school, bringing with them their own materials. Nevertheless, young people will not be expected to have items that bring with them a cost. Pencils, pens and other items are readily available in classrooms for pupils to use. These can be distributed subtly to ensure that children and young people do not

feel discriminated against. Support is given to families and young people who struggle to meet the costs of equipment.

Staff have an awareness of the SIMD profile of the young people and financial constraints which are considered when planning for excursions and events. At expensive times of the year and charity events family donations are accepted to reduce to cost to large families. Within the Bellshill Cluster we can guarantee that no pupils will be excluded from social events as a result of financial constraints.

Students identified as requiring ICT provision at home have been allocated, as per NLC plans with a laptop and internet dongles to support key learning at home.

## Excursions

All school / nursery visits are of educational benefit to young people. Excursions are planned in advance and allow for families to spread the costs. Schools are sympathetic to individual circumstances and open up channels for discussion with individual families to target those who require additional support. A named person will be available for each trip to discuss this support.

All planned trips are non-profit. Before excursions take place schools / nurseries will communicate to parents what will happen if money is left over. This is to keep costs as low as possible for all families. Lunches are made available for those with free meal provision. (Excludes trips abroad)

## Parental views

Across North Lanarkshire views of parents and carers are sought regarding the cost of the school day via online surveys. The survey is designed to seek views of parents and carers as to how schools take into account the cost demands of the school day. Steps are put in place to reduce costs where possible. Centres should also engage with families who do not respond to digital surveys. This should be done by targeting sample groups of parents across the centres demographic. [This survey should be reviewed each year.](https://bit.ly/2Nv8BJd)

## Views of Children and Young People

Views of children and young people should also be sought. Centres gather the views of a variety of young people using different means. Schools use class lessons, pupil councils and individual surveys to capture the views of young people and look to action points raised. This practice should be reviewed each year.

## Charity, fundraising activities, Shows and Themed days

|  |
| --- |
| Bellshill Cluster schools have strong links with Community organisations organisation for groups in the community supporting families with a range of issues. VANL signposts families to organisations such as foodbanks, CAB and FIT to name a few. |

Bellshill Cluster pride itself on being supportive and understanding of the needs and demands on families during difficult times. As much as possible schools plan events and include them on the school calendar. Schools hold a range of resources to support young people such as Halloween costumes and costumes for world book day. No child will be excluded from events due to cost.

Staff have and understanding of financial

constraints and families can contact the staff in school to discuss concerns. Staff will also contact families and young people that they recognise will have added pressure to their financial situation. Collecting money for charitable events will always be made in a discrete manner.

## Period Poverty

To mitigate period poverty all students have access to safe, hygienic sanitary products in school and are available to take home. Students are made aware of product locations and staff who they can speak to confidentially. Discretion and dignity is the priority in planning for these circumstances.

Education and awareness of the hygiene issues surrounding menstruation are crucial and embedded into the curriculum at secondary level through Health and Wellbeing lessons so that students develop a sound knowledge and understanding of how to manage their period safely.

## Food Poverty

MOSSEND

CREDIT UNION Ltd

12

Pollock Street, Mossend, Bellshill, ML4 1QD

[https://www.mosshillcu.co.uk](https://www.mosshillcu.co.uk/)

[/](https://www.mosshillcu.co.uk/)



Breakfast clubs are available in all schools across the Bellshill Cluster. Snacks and breakfast are available to young people to ensure that they do not arrive hungry. Cluster schools and family learning centres also provide snacks to those who arrive at school hungry. Staff are aware of the impact of hunger on a child’s learning and have clear referral pathways in place to ensure that schools are ‘Getting it Right for Every Child’.

School leaders identify students and families experiencing poverty and support them in a number of ways. The cluster has a directory of supports to identify agencies who can help

families facing different circumstances. Schools are aware of the Financial Inclusion Team and share contacts with families.

**THE IMPACT OF BRIGHT IDEAS AND SOLUTIONS TO POVERTY PROOF SCHOOLS!**

There are many examples across North Lanarkshire as to how best approach poverty proofing the school and allowing children to experience a stigma free learning environment where they can flourish and learn. Here are just some of the examples that have proved good practice and made a difference to children and families. Every school will have their own approach and not all schools have the same capacity to introduce support in all areas.

***HELPING WITH P.E***

***No stigma attached to labels. Increased participation in physical education.***

***HELPING OUT WITH CLASSROOM EQUIPMENT***

***Appropriate resources for the school day and no stigma attached to fancy brands.***

***SUPPORTING CHILDREN’S HEALTH AND WELLBEING***

***Access to appropriate personal care items and no child stands out as everyone receives***

***HELP WITH SCHOOL UNIFORMS AND DRESS UP EVENTS***

***Families have good quality clothing and footwear at no/little cost. Children have appropriate items for any events. Positive impact on attendance on ‘special’ days. Reduced stress for children and increased attendance on these days.***

***HELP WITH SCHOOL TRIPS/EXCURSIONS***

***Positive impact on attainment as experiences provide contexts to support learning. Shared experiences with friends. Lower absences. No/Less financial burden.***

***NO GIFT POLICY***

***No financial burden on families, especially at Christmas. No stress for children who don’t have a gift to give***

***INFORMATION COST CALENDAR AVAILABLE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR***

***Families can budget in advance and add to their iPay accounts***

***APPEAL TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY- DONATIONS OF FOOD, CLOTHING, TOYS ETC.***

***More awareness in the community of needs throughout the year. Families in need are supported.***

***INCREASED LINKS WITH ORGANISATIONS AND EXTERNAL AGENCIES***

***Able to refer families and/or signpost them for support. Families’ needs can be met***

# *Bellshill Academy*



Bellshill Academy serves the Bellshill and Mossend areas of North Lanarkshire. The school roll it time of writing is 712 with 44.9% of our young people living in quintile 1. Over a quarter are in receipt of Free School Meals and in Clothing Grants.

As a school we developed very positive and active partnerships across the wider school community and this is reflected in strong partnership working with our associated primary schools of Lawmuir Primary, Mossend Primary and Noble Primary and our work with Tannochside Primary School, Aitken Head Primary School and Bellshill FLC through

Empowering Clusters. We work closely with our Community Learning & Development and Skills Development Scotland colleagues; our Parent Council and a range of other partners. We share a vision with all of our partners to ensure that Bellshill Academy continues to improve in order to provide the best quality learning experiences for all of our young people.

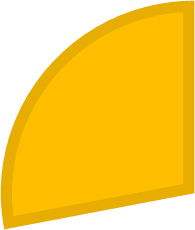
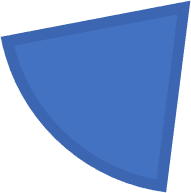
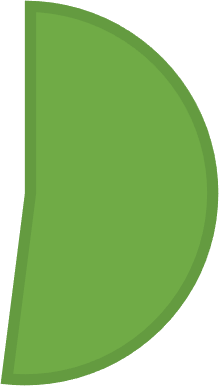
At Bellshill Academy we believe in rewarding futures for all young people. We are fully committed to the wellbeing of all our pupils and believe young people should feel the adults in their school are interested in them and care about their learning. We believe that only when they feel this way, they benefit from our aim which is: *for young people to be continuous learners who are able to secure for themselves rewarding futures in life and work, impacting positively on the future of the Bellshill community, North Lanarkshire, Scotland and the wider world.*

Our Core values are: Community Aspiration Respect Endeavour

## Parental Views

In January 2020 Bellshill Academy issued a survey to parents. 137 responded.

1. The school asks for too much money over a school year



**52**

**%**

**20**

**%**

**28**

**%**



disagee



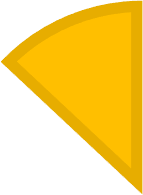
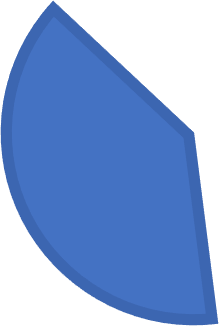
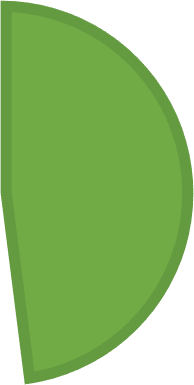
agree



unsure



1. It’s difficult to afford all of the things my child needs for school



**48**

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**48**

**%**

**39**

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**39**

**%**

**13**

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**13**

**%**



disagee



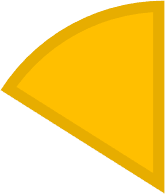
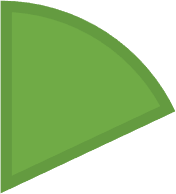
agree



unsure



1. There’s always lots of notice given if the school is asking for money



**18**

**%**

**66**

**%**

**16**

**%**



disagee



agree



unsure



Comments were as follows:

* Are blazers essential?
* Cheaper uniforms than branded uniform
* Cost of the variety of school ties
* Uniform exchange would be useful
* Potential for booklet given info on what the school/LA/government offer in the way of financial help
* Stop expensive trips
* Trips that are part of school course should not cost
* No cost for HE/music
* Better, healthier school lunches: encourage pupils to eat at school
* Could FME pupils be given the ability to eat out of school with their friends

## Financial Support

Bellshill Academy signposts families to the Financial Inclusion Team. The Home School Partnership Officer supports families with applications for financial aid.

## School Uniform

Bellshill Academy operates a full school uniform policy. Support is offered in the following ways:

* Communities Together school uniform bank
* School ties purchased for all pupils for return after ‘lockdown’ in August
* School ties and blazers always supplied to pupils in need who are notified by the Pupil Support Team
* Blazer recycling in operation
* PEF and William Grant Foundation monies used to supply pupils will warm jackets, shoes or other uniform essentials such as trousers, leggings or shirts.

## Equipment and Resources

Bellshill Academy ensures pupils have access to necessary resources. Pupils in need are identified by the Pupil Support Team. PEF and William Grant Foundation monies are used to buy resources such as writing and drawing equipment as well as ICT (to compliment provision from NLC). During lockdown, all pupils were offered packs of resources to complete work at home. This was also issued to all pupils needing to self-isolate when school reopened. This is continued for pupils who a need to learn from home for any reason.

## Period Poverty

Bellshill Academy provides safe and hygienic sanitary products in all toilets used by woman and girls and transgender pupils. This is managed by the senior pupils. Period Poverty is addressed in PSE lessons and there are posters in all pupil toilet facilities.

## Food Poverty

Bellshill Academy runs a completely free Breakfast Club which is open to all pupils and staff. This is funded by the William Grant Foundation. Donations from staff and contributions from Warburtons, Tesco, Morrisons and Tunnochs.

I like b

reakfast club

because I get to

see my

friends and the bagels

are magic.

Josh

I love breakfast club, the ladies

have given me the opportunity to

help out. I miss it so much at lock

own.

Abby

I like breakfast club

because it gives me a

good breakfast so I’m not

hungry in class

.

Jack

Breakfast club is good as some

people don't always get breakfast

in the ho

use before they come to

school.

Bradley

I love the tea and toast as it helps

waken me up for my day in school.

K

atielee

## Other

Bellshill Academy uses a number of other ways to poverty proof our school such as:

* A store with a variety of free resources are available in the Breakfast Club
* Non- uniform days and events have been replaced with ‘giving alternatives’. Instead of a monitory contribution, pupils can offer to help out with the school activity or donate to the food bank. This is monitored by the Pupil Support Team.
* Personal care resources for identified pupil. Pupils highlighted by the Pupil Support Team are bought resources such as hygiene products or bedding.
* Various strategies are used to gift young people with resources and vouchers such a Christmas Eve Boxes and free raffles.
* School trips are subsidized or paid for
* PEF funding has been used to purchase books which can be borrowed for home learning
* Costs associated with HE have been removed.
* Endeavour award trips are free and most transport costs for trips are met by the school or through donations.

## **Pupil Views Planning**

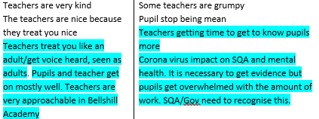
Focus groups were held with pupils and we recorded their views on the curriculum and relationships in the school.



Though not specifically about poverty proofing these views helped shape some of the plans going forward, especially concerning our newly established School Community Zone.

Though there were many positive views, some of the views expressed suggested that a safer place for meeting and doing activities was desired as the existing provision for socialising was not pleasant and some felt unsafe. Pupils also shared wanted a space where they could see each other’s good work and some pupils would like to get to know their teachers more. Pupils think there is benefit to having more clubs during and after school.

A Pupil Voice survey will to pupils to gather views about poverty and the cost of the school day. Focus groups to be held.



### Next Steps

Bellshill Academy is still working towards reducing the cost of the school day and is committed to the following for session 2023-34

* Cost of school day will be linked to Rights Respecting Schools as we work towards a Gold award in 2024
* Cost of the school day will be linked to community campaigns via Pupil Voice group.
* Poverty Proofing policy reviewed with focus on evaluation
* School Community Zone launched to offer breakfast club, nurture and learning spaces for pupils
* Views of P7 parents gathered as part of transition information
* Update parent and pupil feedback sample
* Update cluster directory

#### Examples of school Notices



