**Rationale**

 The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act, 2017, requires the Scottish Government to reduce the number of children who live in poverty. North Lanarkshire Council’s Education and Families Service is committed to supporting children and their families through a ‘Universal, ‘Additional’ and ‘Intensive’ model of support. There are families who struggle financially across the authority and within our school 42% of families claimed access to Free School Meals in the year 2020-21.

This policy outlines the ways in which Bothwellpark High School supports our families. Across the school we adopt a nurturing ethos and open-door policy where we will do our best to support children and families through whatever challenges they may face. Planning in school incorporates poverty impact assessment. We will advertise supports routinely through the year and be responsive to supporting our families if a need arises. Children and their families may experience poverty in different ways. There may be a change of circumstances such as family separation, a new baby or bereavement that may cause families to find themselves struggling financially. Pupil Equity Funding from the Scottish Government will be used to support access to learning, social and extracurricular activities hosted by the school to ensure availability for all.

Poverty can affect children and families in different ways:

1. School and Family Learning Centre Poverty: We make every effort to ensure families are not financially impacted by their children attending school.
2. Food Poverty: We ensure that food is available for children, that those eligible for free meals at school and through the holidays are aware and supported to access this.
3. Maximising Income: We will provide financial education for children at a level appropriate to their age and stage, and work with families to get support from the Financial Inclusion Team as required.
4. Fuel and Material Poverty: Some families may struggle to afford heating, toys, bedding towels. We will work with families and our wider community to support them the best we can.

**Universal Supports:**

* Transport to and from school – families can request that their child receives transport to and from school by bus or taxi. Alternatively, families can bring their child to school and claim parental expenses for the journeys.
* Cost of the school day – we will not routinely charge families for curricular activities such as cookery or day trips.
* School uniform can be bought branded with the school logo, or if families prefer, they can buy non-branded purple sweatshirts / fleeces, white polo shirts and black trousers from suppliers they know to be less expensive. Children who cannot wear school uniform due to sensory needs or their thought processes will be accepted in clothing they are comfortable in.
* Additional clothing, such as waterproofs and wellies for outdoor learning will be available for children who do not have these.
* Activities in school that may cost families money such as school photographs will be spread across the year and arranged in advance. Families will be given plenty of notice. The S6 residential will be planned well in advance and can be paid up over a timeframe that suits them. Where possible big events will be subsidised through enterprise activities and fundraising events.
* Sanitary products are available in school for children and staff to access. We do not charge for PPE or materials required to support children with personal care. Continence products are supplied to families following assessment from nursing services.
* Our curriculum in school gives children the opportunity to learn about money and budgeting at a level appropriate to their level of understanding.
* Extra-curricular activities will be offered at no charge to families. We will look to support families with transport home from clubs at the end of the school day where their usual mode of transport is not possible.
* Children do not need to bring resources to school – practical materials, pencils, paper, IT equipment are provided. Children may have their own device or belongings that are important to them and are welcome to bring these to school.
* Children are not expected to wear different clothes for events at school and families are not expected to give donations to charity days, fundraisers etc.
* Travel pass – can apply for free bus travel, discounted rail travel and a +1 carer fare. [Disabled card | North Lanarkshire Council](https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-council/national-entitlement-card-nec/disabled-card)
* Young Scot Card – can access discounts [The Young Scot Card | Young Scot](https://young.scot/the-young-scot-card)
* Library Card - [Join the Library | Culture NL](https://culturenl.co.uk/libraries/join/inthelibrary/)

**Additional Supports:**

* Free School Meals

[Free school meals | North Lanarkshire Council](https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/school-meals/free-school-meals-and-clothing-grants/free-school-meals)

* Signpost families whose younger siblings may benefit from Club 365 ( [Club 365 | North Lanarkshire Council](https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/school-meals/club-365) ) – ensuring primary age children have access to meals during the holidays. club365@northlan.gov.uk
* Clothing Grants

[Clothing grants | North Lanarkshire Council](https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/school-meals/free-school-meals-and-clothing-grants/clothing-grants)

* Referral to Financial Inclusion Team with families’ permission

fit@northlan.gov.uk 01698 551

* Educational Maintenance Allowance

[Education Maintenance Allowance | North Lanarkshire Council](https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/additional-support-families-and-children/education-maintenance-allowance)

* Children and young people without access to a digital device or internet access are supported through NLC procedures and are provided with a laptop and/or internet dongle.
* Snacks provided at school for break time.
* School uniform recycling scheme
* PE kits for children who require them
* Toiletries stock for educational purposes and can be sent home routinely if required.
* Families may require support to complete forms, or to ‘scan and send’ completed forms.
* We will work with families and Social Work Departments to support the SDS assessment process to ensure a full and robust assessment of need informs any budget decisions for support while the children are at school and as the young people prepare to transition into adult services.
* We will work with speech and language therapists to support their assessments of individual children’s communication needs. Where appropriate they can then identify and provide communication aids for our children and young people. Where there is equipment, we can buy to support communication, ‘Boardmaker’ for example to make symbols, we will supply families with the symbols they may need to prevent them needing to buy the programme and associated IT equipment.
* We will work with Occupational Therapists to support assessments of children’s daily living skills and sensory needs. Where appropriate we will buy equipment on their recommendations that would support sensory integration, emotional regulation or equipment to assist with eating and drinking. We will loan families equipment to try before they buy as some children present very differently at home compared with school. Occupational Therapists through the Social Work department may be able to help families with housing adaptations that may lead to better outcomes for their child.
* If the school becomes aware of funds that would give families access to additional funding we will share this information through Groupcall, our website or social media channels.
* If families cannot attend learning showcase events or parents’ evenings because of travel costs, we will work with families on an individual basis to help come to a solution that works for them. This may include connecting digitally or a school funded bus to collect and drop off families who want to attend the event in person.
* Some of our community partners provide gifts during the festive periods for our children. We support these partners for ideas of gifts and if there are any families that may need specific items in the gift.

**Intensive Supports:**

We will support families who find themselves in emergency financial difficulties to connect with local social work services, food banks and local charities.

**Funding / Sources of support:**

* Financial Inclusion Team

fit@northlan.gov.uk 01698 551

* Independent Living Fund: [Transition Fund - ILF](https://ilf.scot/transition-fund/)

Up to £1500 for young people with a disability over 16 to try new activities that may support their transition out of school.

* Lanarkshire food banks:

[BASICS FOOD BANK (LANARKSHIRE) - Home (weebly.com)](https://basicsfoodbanklanarkshire.weebly.com/)

[North Lanarkshire food banks - UK Bill Help](https://www.billhelp.uk/north-lanarkshire-food-banks/)

* Bellshill YMCA have a daily ‘help yourself’ food point.
* Scottish Welfare Grant / Crisis Grant / Community Care Grant / financial advice contacts

[Scottish Welfare Fund | North Lanarkshire Council](https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/benefits-and-money/scottish-welfare-fund)

**Information Sources:**

NLC Tackling Poverty Strategy 2020-2023, ‘Towards a Fairer North Lanarkshire’

NLC Child Poverty Action Report 2019

NLC Education and Families Guidance Paper on poverty proofing schools and early learning centres (Available in ‘Poverty Proofing Schools Workstream’ tile in Microsoft Teams)

NLC Poverty NLC Proofing Resources (Available in ‘Poverty Proofing Schools Workstream’ tile in Microsoft Teams)

Cost of the School Day Toolkit - [The Cost of School Day Toolkit.pdf (cpag.org.uk)](https://cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/page/The%20Cost%20of%20School%20Day%20Toolkit.pdf)