

# Dykehead Primary School

*'Determined Pupils Succeed'*



## Financial Inclusion Policy

### Rationale

In Scotland almost one in four children are officially recognised as living in poverty; this equates to some 230,000 children. This is higher than many other European countries. The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act (2017) now places statutory duties on all local authorities to produce an annual local action report on how they plan to tackle child poverty. This policy document outlines how this strategy is realised in the context of Dykehead Primary School, and aims to raise awareness of what assistance is available to support the inclusion of families who may be experiencing poverty.

There are many reasons why children are in poverty. Some children may only be in poverty for a short period of time, or may transition in and out of poverty at different times during their childhood. Others may find themselves in poverty for a number of years. Some families with savings may still be able to afford basic necessities even in periods of low income, whereas others may struggle to afford these goods and services even if their income is close to or even slightly above the poverty line (Scot Gov, 2018). The Scottish Government employs several different categories to define levels of poverty, mostly linked to income.

*In Dykehead Primary School, for our children and families, we define poverty as having inadequate opportunity or resource to participate confidently in social, cultural, leisure, educational or decision-making activities in our school community.*

This inadequate resource may be financial, such as money to pay for a school trip, material, such as provision of school uniform, or related to basic needs such as adequate food in the family home. When making decisions at school level, we strive to consider and reduce inequalities of outcome linked to socio-economic disadvantage.

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### Poverty & Educational Outcomes

At Dykehead Primary School, we are committed to ensuring that no child is excluded from any aspect of their educational experience, due to financial hardship. We endeavour to keep additional costs to parents to a minimum, and would always encourage parents to contact the school if they are experiencing difficulty.

We recognise that the link between poverty and educational attainment is a complex one, and aim to build trust and dialogue with families where needs can be explored rather than assumed. We scrutinise assumptions in order to dispel pervading myths, such as a ‘poverty of aspiration’ (Treasor, 2020).

#### Pupil Equity

The Scottish Government continues to offer the Pupil Equity Fund, in order to support schools in financing initiatives designed to reduce poverty related barriers to pupil attainment. At Dykehead Primary School this funding has been used to offer targeted interventions in Literacy and Numeracy, and to support Health and Wellbeing. For further information please see the Equity Plan section in our Annual Improvement Plan, available on our website.

#### School Excursions

Throughout the year, all children are offered the opportunity to go on an educational excursion with their class. The cost of a trip is subsidised by the school using the school fund, in order to minimise costs passed on to families. In addition, families are given plenty of notice so that they can choose to ‘pay up’ this cost in manageable amounts, should they wish to. The school would encourage families to contact us in confidence, in the event that they are having difficulty meeting the cost of a school excursion.

#### Out of School Hours Learning

Pupils expressing themselves through culture helps them to make social connections, boosts their self-esteem and well-being, and often helps them to make sense of the world around them (Scot Gov, 2018). We aim to ensure that a pupil’s background is not a barrier to their opportunities or participation in extra-curricular activities. As such, school staff offer a range of Out of School Hours Learning, at no charge to families.

#### Developing the Young Workforce

If children living in poverty suffer poorer attainment at every stage in school, this will restrict their future earning potential and increase the risk of passing poverty between generations. To this end, the School maintains a focus on Developing the Young Workforce, exploring the range of ways in which

the school can support children in gathering skills and experience which will maximise their opportunities for further or higher education and future employment.

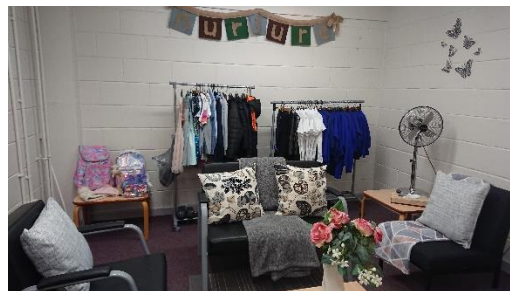
As a school, we aim to support all pupils in taking on roles and responsibilities, ensuring we have a broad representation from across our pupil community.

## Poverty & Inclusion

### School Uniform

Clothing children for school, and providing lunches, can place financial burdens upon families. North Lanarkshire Council accepts application from parents for free school meals & clothing grants, from families in receipt of certain eligible benefits. Applications forms are made via the North Lanarkshire Council website.

In addition to this, Dykehead Primary School have initiated their own Uniform Bank, where parents can donate items of uniform, which have been used but remain in good condition. Families in need can discretely browse these items, and help themselves to whatever they need.



### School Meals

All North Lanarkshire schools offer a Breakfast Club, which is free to all pupils in P1-5 and those from P6-7 who are in receipt of free school meals. Families can also use **Club 365**, where activities and lunch are provided to children at weekends and during school holidays, at venues all across North Lanarkshire. These services provide a valuable support for families who may be experiencing food poverty.

### Fundraising

To reduce financial pressures on families, Dykehead Primary School are working to reduce the occasions where we appeal to parents for fundraising or sponsorship money. Where these activities do take place, we actively focus on local and school fundraising, rather than causes which do not directly benefit our families and communities.

### North Lanarkshire Financial Inclusion Team

The Financial Inclusion Team provide a range of support services to North Lanarkshire residents. This includes; advice on maximising income, offering a free and confidential benefits check, helping with benefit claims or appeals, redundancy advice, advice on council tax problems, assistance with debt issues, or support with budgeting. They can help in a range of ways, from filling out forms, to home visits or phone calls. The Financial Inclusion Team is a free service and can be contacted directly by the family at [fit@northlan.gov.uk](mailto:fit@northlan.gov.uk) or on 01698 332551.

## Poverty & Mental Health

“Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are stressful and traumatic events in childhood that can have significant impacts on children’s development and long-term outcomes into adulthood. They include abuse, neglect, parental separation, alcohol and drug problems, mental health difficulties, domestic violence, and parental imprisonment.

Although ACEs can be seen across income groups, living in a low-income household is associated with higher levels of ACEs. Children growing up in poverty also have less access to resources that help reduce the negative impacts of ACEs – for example, sports clubs, leisure activities, and good quality housing and neighbourhoods. The stress associated with growing up in poverty is often considered an ACE in itself, along with other stressful experiences that can be associated with poverty, such as homelessness and area deprivation.” (Scot Gov, 2018).

### The Solihull Approach

At Dykehead Primary School, staff are trained in the Solihull Approach, an evidence-based approach to increasing emotional health and wellbeing. It brings together theories of containment, reciprocity and behaviour management, to provide practitioners with a framework for working with families on relationships and wellbeing. This is particularly important where families have experienced ACEs and poverty.

### Growth Mindset

Furthermore, we have introduced whole-school practice of Growth Mindset. Growth Mindset is the belief that skills and intelligence can be improved with effort and persistence. People with a growth mindset embrace challenges, stay resilient in the face of difficulties, learn from constructive criticism and seek out inspiration in others’ success. The point of growth mindset is to learn and to improve, not to achieve. People who have a growth mindset believe that even if they struggle with certain skills, their abilities aren’t set in stone. This can benefit all of our children and families, but may be a particular support where they may be experiencing additional stresses and anxieties in their lives, perhaps linked to poverty.

### Nurture

Thanks to our Pupil Equity Funding, Dykehead Primary School continue to be able to offer a Nurturing space, which the children have named “The Cabin”. It offers a calm and caring small-group environment, where children experiencing adversity or disadvantage can participate in experiences carefully designed to support their needs.

### Partnership Working

At Dykehead Primary School, we work closely with a range of agencies in Education, Health, and Social Work, as well as third sector partners, in order to provide the highest quality support for our children and families. This multi-agency work is critical in addressing the impact of Adverse Experiences for our pupils.

### The Emotional Impact of Poverty

The stigma associated with poverty can affect self-perception and self-confidence, and can result in reduced participation and social isolation, as people avoid situations where they may be labelled by others. In the school context it can have a negative impact on the level of engagement of families with the school, and their willingness to talk openly about issues affecting them. This reinforces exclusion and makes it more difficult for people to escape from poverty. At Dykehead Primary School we have

a comprehensive Anti-Bullying Strategy, which we use to teach children that everyone should be included, regardless of their background or circumstances. We continue to seek to engage with all of our families, in ways which meet their needs. We have quiet and discrete areas of the school, where we can meet with families in privacy, and our families can always rely upon the professionalism, understanding, and discretion of our staff.

*Should you have any questions about our Financial Inclusion Policy, please contact the school directly.*

### [References/ Useful Documents](#)

North Lanarkshire Council (2019), *Local Child Poverty Action Report*.

Scottish Government (2018), *Every Child, Every Chance; The tackling child poverty deliver plan 2018-2022*.

Scottish Government (2017), *Child Poverty (Scotland) Act*.

Treanor, M. (2020) *Child Poverty: Aspiring to Survive*.