



FIRPARK
PRIMARY
SCHOOL

*The Cost of
the School
Day*

Policy and Practice



Policy Context

Child poverty rates in the world's wealthiest nations vary from under 3 per cent to over 25 per cent (Figure 1). One in every six of the rich world's children is living in poverty. In total, approximately 47 million children in the nations of the OECD live below their national poverty lines. – UNICEF

OECD identifies the challenges faced by children who have a disadvantaged background and acknowledges no country has yet got rid of **inequality in education**. It highlights improving equity in education is a priority.

OECD (2018), *Equity in Education: Breaking Down Barriers to Social Mobility*, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris

What are **children's rights** in Scotland?

Right to life, survival and development; Right to non-discrimination; Right to express views freely; Right to have a child's best interests taken as a primary consideration in all matters affecting them. – UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

In February 2017 we introduced the **Child Poverty Bill** to the Scottish Parliament, which sets out targets to reduce the number of children experiencing the effects of poverty by 2030. Following scrutiny the Bill was passed unanimously in the Scottish Parliament in November 2017, receiving Royal Assent in December 2017. – The Scottish Government

What is **child poverty** Scotland?

Children are considered to be living in poverty if they live in households with less than 60% of median household income. This is the key measure used by UK and Scottish Government. ... Less than £373 a week or £19,400 a year for a single person with children aged five and 14.- Child Poverty in Scotland

We want to ensure that North Lanarkshire will be the place where everyone has **equality of opportunity**, a place where individuals and communities are poverty free. – Councillor Jim Logue, Tackling Poverty Strategy 2020-2023.



Poverty Proofing

Schools have a key role to play in tackling poverty and serving all learners equally is not enough – there needs to be a specific focus on those children and young people who are growing up in poverty. Within Firpark Primary School we believe that tackling disadvantage is at the heart of what we do.

More than one in five (210,000) children across Scotland are officially recognised as living in poverty. In North Lanarkshire, it is estimated that 24.9% (17,922) of children are in poverty. Insufficient household income can mean that some children and young people don't have the resources needed for school and can't easily afford to take part in school activities which cost money. This can put them at risk of missing out on opportunities at school and feeling different, excluded and unhappy.

UNICEF estimates that 19% of British children live in food insecure households. This means that there are times when their household does not have enough money to buy enough food, or they cannot buy the full variety of foods needed for a healthy diet.

Education structures, policies and practices affect children and young people from low income households and can present difficulties and financial barriers to participation throughout the school and nursery day. Understanding more about this from children's perspectives can support Education and Families, schools and family learning centres to poverty-proof their policies and practices so that conditions are right for all children and young people to learn and to achieve.

This policy details our plan to poverty proof our school.

In Firpark Primary School we are committed to respecting all individuals in our school and including everyone in the life of our school community. We are poverty proofing our school through engagement with stakeholders. Taking into account our school context and the importance of equity for our pupils and families we aim for this to lessen financial barriers and be a positive step in tackling the impact poverty has on some of our children and their families. To inform this change we have included the opinions and views of the following stakeholders:

- Pupils
- Staff
- Parents/Carers
- Partners in CLD
- NLC Cost of the School Day working group
- Schools within our cluster

This policy demonstrates how we look to implement changes within our school. It is a working document to be used by all stakeholders and amended as we develop our poverty proofing strategies as a school.

Pupil Equity Fund (PEF)

In recent years we have been provided with financial support from the Scottish Government, through the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) to tackle poverty and raise attainment within our school. This was distributed based on the circumstances of our pupils and was part of a £750 million Attainment Scotland Fund, running over the current parliamentary term (2016-2021).

All councils across Scotland benefit from this fund and is allocated dependent on geographic residence of our pupils and whether they are eligible for free school meals.

Each Head Teacher has discretion to spend this fund, in partnership with the local authority. Each school has a plan on how they will use PEF funds and have been implementing the actions within the plans for the past few years.

Within Firpark Primary School we have taken into consideration the geographical and support requirements of our families alongside the additional support needs of our pupils and put the following strategies in place to combat these:

Staffing

CLD worker

- Funding directed to increase CLD worker time with school by 2 days per week
- Aimed to create a network of support due to families scattered geographically across the South and Central localities of NLC.
- Workshops provided to support pupil behaviour, access to various grants/funds and links to other families.

Teaching Staff

- Funding directed to increase teaching staff in order to target specific areas of pupil engagement. This was aimed at addressing pupil needs in reducing barriers to learning and increase attainment.
- Targeted Areas of Development: Literacy, Numeracy, Communication and Outdoor Learning experiences. We have also been targeting the link between physical movement and readiness for curricular learning experiences.

Resources

- Resources are vital in supporting our pupils and families to allow them to access relevant learning experiences on an equitable basis. Therefore, over the past few years we have purchased and extended our use of resources specifically in the areas of literacy, numeracy, communication and outdoor learning. This has led to an increase in opportunities for all of our pupils to engage in curricular learning on an equitable basis. Outdoor learning equipment, communication iPads with relevant apps, sensory resources and Touchtronic resources have all contributed to this.
- We aim for the impact of targeted funding in staffing and resources to lead to better equipped families and learners. In tackling poverty we hope that all provided opportunities lead to an increase in financial support, emotional support in addressing behaviour concerns and provide a support network and reduce pupils' barriers to learning.

Our policy covers four over-arching themes:

1. **School and Family Learning Poverty:** this section of the policy focuses on tackling poverty via a review of the 'Cost of the School/Nursery Day' and the continued focus on tackling period poverty.
2. **Food Poverty:** this section of the policy links to North Lanarkshire's 'Children's Right to Food Charter' and focuses on our role in the continued development of Club 365 and increasing the uptake of free school meal and breakfast club provision.
3. **Maximising Income:** this section of the policy focuses on Financial Education for children and their families in partnership with North Lanarkshire's Financial Inclusion Team. It also provides details on how the cluster will work effectively on identifying those children living in poverty and supports which will be provided to their families.
4. **Fuel and Material Poverty:** this section of our policy focuses on consideration of the impacts of these types of poverty and actions which must be taken.

Section 1

School and Family Learning Centre Poverty

Theme 1 – School Uniform

School uniform is a way for our pupils to identify with their place of learning. It creates a sense of belonging and gives a physical/visual cue to pupils that this is a school day. This is very important for our families, allowing them a means to prepare their child for the day ahead.

In Firpark Primary School:

- Pupils wear yellow polo shirts and maroon jumpers with the school logo.
- Pupils are always welcomed into their school day irrespective of if they wear uniform or not.
- Parents are given information on the school uniform in their induction session to the school.
- We give parents clothing grant forms as part of their induction pack and offer support to complete it.
- We advertise how to apply for the clothing grant on an annual basis.
- Parents are informed of suppliers of the school uniform.
- We encourage families to donate and recycle used school uniforms.
- Pupils can wear their own clothes for swimming and PE sessions.
- We keep a supply of PE kits/swimming kits for pupils to borrow and provide kits to identified pupils.
- We assist pupils in laundering their clothes if and when required.



Theme 2 – Equipment and Resources

In Firpark Primary School:

- Resources such as stationery items, jotters, art resources and electronic devices are available centrally within the school and within each class to enable all pupils to access resources to learning equitably.
- Pupils are, in general, not allowed to bring personal belongings such as toys, mobile phones etc. into school unless arranged specifically with a member of the management team for a specific purpose.
- All costs of curricular activities are funded and provided by the school. Within the laundry room of the school there is a bank of clothing that can be accessed for PE/swimming if needed.
- Pupils are welcome to wear their own clothing for outdoor learning but the school has a bank of outdoor equipment that is available for all pupils and staff to be appropriately equipped.

Theme 3 – School trips

We acknowledge in our annual planning of school outings that the cost associated can cause anxiety for families.

In Firpark Primary School:

- School trips are planned on an annual basis and incorporated into the yearly planner of the school.
- Every effort is made by the school to make school trips affordable for all families and will ask for no more than £6.50 for a trip depending on the overall cost. The school pay the remainder of the cost for any planned outing.
- Parents are given ample time to make payment of trips.
- A Cost Calendar is issued to parents each year to allow time to stagger cost or prepare for outings. Trips can be paid by cash, cheque or iPay Impact.
- Members of the management team, when planning trips, ensure that any families that have multiple children in the school, and/or in mainstream schools are supported in ensuring their children can attend a school trip.
- School trip letters make reference to who can be contacted in the event that a parent cannot afford or require support in making payments.
- Pupils, on the whole, are asked not to bring spending money to school trips and if there is an occasion where this is permitted a limit would be placed on how much pupils should bring.
- Staff are aware of families that would be likely to require support and build a relationship with parents/carers that means they would be approachable if they have financial implications.
- Packed lunches are always requested and provided for all pupils who in receipt of a free school meal.

Theme 4 – Charity, Fundraising Activities, School Shows and Themed Days

Charity, Fundraising Events, School Shows and Themed Days can be a very positive experience for our pupils and, in some cases, a necessary one to reduce barriers. However, as a school team we are very mindful that not all families can afford to make even the smallest of donations.

In Firpark Primary School:

- We work closely with our CLD officer in identifying families that would benefit from accessing charitable funds such as the Family Fund. She also refers families that require assistance to the local food bank.
- Due to the nature of our ASN establishment we are mindful that not only do some families have multiple children within our school but also in mainstream primaries/secondaries and so we make clear in any correspondence that donations can be per family if possible.
- Fundraising activities and events are scheduled on a 3 year rotation and at different points of the year. Contributions are considered and not all events require a donation.
- We include all events in the cost calendar at the beginning of the academic year.
- Pupils are included in all events and if there is an event with a particular dress code every attempt will be made to ensure that all pupils are able to join in.
- We will give a variety of options for themed day that pupils may have at home.
- We consider all pupils and are mindful in how we collect donations.
- Each pupil is treated as an individual and we are respectful if they choose not to participate.

Theme 5 – Homework and Out of School Hours Learning

In Firpark Primary School:

- We do not, at present, run any after school clubs due to the transport arrangements for our pupils.
- Resources for home learning are provided by the school and/or online.
- No class lessons are wholly reliant on completion of home learning tasks. Any tasks offered are there to supplement class learning.
- Home learning is tailored to the needs of our pupils and so each individual may have different resources to work from or expectations placed on them.
- Staff are very aware of the needs of the pupils and how this affects families. The needs and limitations of families as a whole are always taken into consideration when assigning homework tasks.

Theme 6 – Period Poverty

In Firpark Primary School:

- Free sanitary products are available to all pupils.
- Products are located at centrally located areas within the school and are accessed for pupils in a dignified way.
- School nurses are given a list of pupils each year who would benefit from personal hygiene talks and staff are very aware of each individuals' needs and how to best look after the pupil's personal care.
- The school would always be in constant dialogue with the pupil's family to ensure that their needs are being met respectfully.

Section 2

Food Poverty

In Firpark Primary School:

- All pupils arrive to school at 9am on NLC transport, taxi or parental drop off.
- Provision has been made for some pupils/classes to access breakfast club during the week.
- Staff are very aware of the pastoral needs of pupils and any children who require it are given something to eat on arrival and snacks are provided on the occasion that any pupils do not bring them to school.
- Club 365 has been advertised via all school social media forums and parents were invited to attend.
- Staff would be in regular contact with SLT if they have concerns over a pupil being hungry at school. SLT would then decide a course of action to remedy this in consultation with parents or other agencies.
- On all school trips packed lunches are requested and provided for all pupils in receipt of school meals.

Section 3

Maximising Income

In Firpark Primary School we offer Financial Education and advice for children, young people and their families in collaboration with the CLD worker in the following ways:

- Introduction to CLD Officer in their induction to the school.
- Regular post on all school forums offering advice/support with financial concerns.
- Workshops delivered by our CLD Officer.
- Referrals to the CLD Officer by the school or on the request of a parent.

For families living in poverty, we will offer support in partnership with the Financial inclusion Team, Employability Resources, CLD and, where appropriate, Health and Social Work for advice and support.

Section 4

Fuel and Material Poverty

In Firpark Primary School we will make a referral to the Financial Inclusion Team if we think a family is experiencing fuel and/ or material poverty.

To make a referral to the Financial Inclusion Team we will follow this process:

Email: FIT@northlan.gov.uk

Alternatively, if a parent or carer wishes to self-refer they can call **01698 332551**.