

# MOSSEND PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY CLASS 2020-2021 - VERSION 1

## TACKLING POVERTY POLICY



We the pupils of Mossend PS & NC promise to be

*Hardworking, Enthusiastic and unafraid of making and talking about mistakes!*

It's ok to get it wrong

We praise hard work, effort and commitment  
Everyone can!

We understand the Power of  
**YET!**

PRACTICE MAKES PROGRESS

Mossend Primary School and Nursery Class  
**'Where Stars Shine Brighter'**



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## Version Control

Version	Date	Reviewed by	Changes	Review Due
1	March 2021	T McCulloch Acting Head Teacher	Created Policy	August 2021

## 1.0 - Tackling Poverty 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 Mossend Primary School and Nursery Class, and aims to raise awareness of what assistance is available to those who may be experiencing poverty.

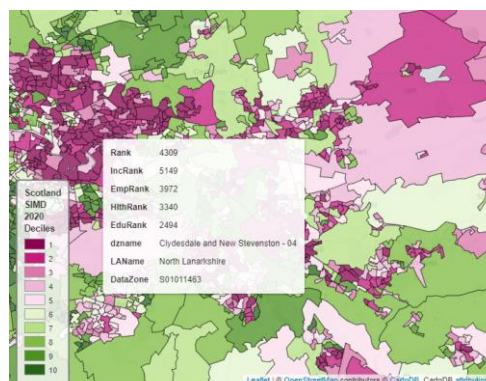
There are many reasons why children are in poverty.

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).



### **1.1 Mossend Primary School and Nursery Class Context**



### **1.3 Definition of Poverty**

The Scottish Government employs several different categories to define levels of poverty, mostly linked to income.

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. As a school we are mindful of the impact that the 2020-21 Coronavirus pandemic may have had on the circumstances and finances of the families in our school community.

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

## **2.0 Poverty & Education**

At Mossend Primary School and Nursery Class, 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.

### **2.1 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. This is a free service, and the school can make a referral on behalf of a family. Alternatively, The Financial Inclusion Team can be contacted at [fit@northlan.gov.uk](mailto:fit@northlan.gov.uk) or on 01698 332551.

### **2.2 It Pays to Switch**

'It Pays to Switch' is a comparison website which will continue to help save money on energy bills.

On average people save over **£200** on their annual energy bills using this. It is **free** to use and there is no obligation to accept any of the offers on display.

The team can be contacted on the freephone number 0800 920 2136, for any advice or guidance through the process.

### **2.3 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 Mossend Primary School this funding has been used to offer targeted interventions in Literacy and Numeracy, and to support Health and Wellbeing.

### **2.4 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 them in the event that they are having difficulty meeting the cost of a school excursion.

### **2.5 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.

### **2.6 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, School Improvement Plans will include a focus on Developing the Young Workforce, and outline the range of ways in which the school aims to 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.

### **3.0 Poverty & Inclusion**

It is our policy to ensure that poverty is not a barrier to accessing education or the benefits of education and therefore we consider how to be inclusive to all families, taking consideration of the cost of the school day.

#### **3.1 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 can be collected from the school or the First Stop Shop, or downloaded from the North Lanarkshire Council website.

The Scottish Government now also offer the **Best Start Grant**, a one off payment of £250 to help with the costs of having a child of school starting age, such as the costs of a new school bag, to pay for school trips or after school activities. Parents can apply online at [mygov.scot](http://mygov.scot), or by phone.

In addition to this, Mossend Primary School intend to initiate their own Uniform Bank in session 2021/2022, 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.



### **3.2 School Meals**

All North Lanarkshire schools offer a Breakfast Club, which is free to all pupils in P1-3 and those from P4-7 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.

### **3.3 Fundraising**

To reduce financial pressures on families, Mossend Primary School and Nursery Class 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.

### **3.4 Holidays**

We recognise that holidays can put additional financial strain on families. We endeavour to work in partnership with third sector agencies, such as the Salvation Army, by making applications for support on behalf of our families.

## **4.0 Digital Divide**



Mossend Primary School and Nursery Class are proud to be recognised as one of the first schools in Scotland and North Lanarkshire to achieve Digital School Award.

Digital technology plays an enormous role in life in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and it is now difficult to imagine a job or industry that does not involve some level of digital skills and therefore equipping our pupils to participate fully in the ever digitised social and cultural landscapes that live in is fundamental to everything we do.

However, we are also acutely aware that a digital divide exists and therefore not every child has access to a digital device or internet connectivity.

### **4.1 Supporting Parents/Carers**

To support parents/carers we offer regular workshops on digital technology and create helpful videos and communications. Our Parent Zone on our website has helpful links for parents/carers looking to find out more about digital technology and guides for Cyber Resilience and keeping safe online.

### **4.2 Lack of digital device or internet connectivity**

Where families do not have access to a digital device then we are able to loan a device for pupils who require it for key stages of their learning. In our digital technology home learning/lockdown and school closure plans we ensure that we provide opportunities for pupils to participate offline and our website contains many ideas for home learning without a digital device.

As part of North Lanarkshire Council and Scottish Government initiatives we are able to provide wi-fi dongles to families who require it for key stages of pupil learning.

## **5.0 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).

### **5.1 The Solihull Approach**

At Mossend Primary School and Nursery Class, 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.

### **5.2 Partnership Working**

At Mossend Primary School and Nursery Class, 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.

### **5.3 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 Mossend Primary School and Nursery Class 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.

### **5.4 Mossend Wellbeing Hub**

At Mossend Primary School and Nursery Class we have devised our own digital wellbeing hub which acts as a one stop shop for parents to easily access support available within the local community.



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

## **References**

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

Scottish Government (2017), 'Child Poverty (Scotland) Act

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