An Approach to Poverty Proofing at Yetholm and Morebattle Primary Schools

This approach describes the specific ways in which we, at Yetholm and Morebattle, support our young people around issues of poverty. The whole approach is underpinned by the following principles:

As a whole school, we always strive to establish high quality, non-judgemental relationships, characterised by friendliness and trust, with all our school families.

We approach any discussion with our school families about costs/money with discretion and sensitivity.

All staff raise awareness with one another of children who we are aware may be at risk of being affected by poverty.

There is an appreciation by all staff that providing equity is paramount. We recognise that this may mean some children are treated differently from others.

Costs Associated with School

- We value inclusive approaches to organising, planning and delivering school trips.
- We cap the cost of any trip as a maximum of £3. We will seek the support of the Parent Council in subsidising trips where possible.
- We stagger payment for residential trips across a year, avoiding expectation of payment in November/December.
- We make referrals to Borders Children's Charity to support any youngster who wishes to attend residential, but faces a financial challenge around this.
- We have an annual 'Fighting Fund' set aside in the school budget to support any school costs for youngsters who require this.
- We provide lower-cost options as a matter of course, eg Christmas Jumper Day becomes 'A Touch of Christmas' day.
- We place a sensible limit on spending money for residential or school trips.

Hunger

- We informally, quietly and respectfully provide breakfast to a child, if required.
- We signpost to local support services such as Kelso North Church Foodbank, if required.
- We highlight the availability of Free School Meals and Clothing Grant in school handbooks, on the Facebook page and individually (face to face/phone) as appropriate.
- As a school we are proactive in making contact with/supporting families where hunger may be a challenge.

Uniform

- Our handbook and Primary 1 welcome presentations make it clear that non-branded, good value polo shirts/jumpers are entirely acceptable as part of school uniform.
- Staff make no judgement about alternative clothing/footwear- we value comfort, warmth and affordability over conformity (though we encourage the closest approximation of uniform wherever possible).
- We avoid any humiliation over non-standard uniform at all costs.

November 2017
Reviewed January 2023

- School annually considers and sources less expensive clothing options for families.
- We will not under any circumstances, provide old, tatty, second-hand uniform to those in need. We believe they deserve new clothing, like their peers.

Charitable giving

- We have a maximum of one charitable event per block (ie 4x year)
- We consider activities such as bag-packing/car-washing (which have inherent benefits) and avoid simply asking for donations on every occasion.
- All our publicity (letters/newsletter, Facebook, memo) makes it clear that a "small" donation is welcome at the discretion of parents – we never specify a minimum amount.

Learning

- Staff awareness is such that we recognise the needs of children around basic resources – we provide freely, and without judgment, resources that allow all children to access the curriculum and engage fully in learning.
- We provide opportunities for children who may not be able at home, to access the internet withing school time to help them complete any home-learning tasks.
- Teachers will consider a 'Menu' of home learning tasks to allow children to opt in/out of activities, ensuring that cost is never a barrier to contributing their learning.

In conclusion

Whilst we acknowledge that poverty is a societal issue that school alone cannot eradicate, however we also recognise that we must play our part in supporting any children and school families affected by poverty to the very best of our ability.