

### Rationale and Background to the Policy

We are aware, as a school, that insufficient household income can mean that some children simply do not have the resources needed for school and often cannot easily afford to take part in the wide range of our school activities which cost money. Currently 1 in 4 children in Scotland live in poverty. Poverty is by its nature often dynamic and people move in and out of poverty - there are short term, recurrent and persistent states of poverty depending on individual and family circumstances. Findings of a recent 'Growing Up in Scotland' survey have revealed that over the last 7 years only 45% of children in Scotland HAVE NOT experienced at least one year of growing up in poverty.

The Child Poverty Action Group recently commissioned and produced some support materials to assist schools and School Parent Councils with ideas to alleviate some of these concerns.

The school is already in receipt of monies under the Scottish Government's Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) where financial resources are allocated to the school based on the number of pupils in receipt of free school meals. Through this we identified a structured approach to establish and address the poverty related attainment gap, develop and promote Health & Wellbeing, develop play in P1, develop afterschool/lunchtime opportunities and promote pupil engagement.

We also engage with our pupils, families and staff annually regarding our Participatory Budget spend, ensuring that all of our school community have a say in how we spend 5% of our PEF budget.

As a school we pride ourselves on the inclusive ethos and positive engagement that exists between staff and pupils and between pupils at all levels of school life. With Equity and Nurture key school values, we have a strong sense of the importance of fairness and social justice. All pupils and families, irrelevant of financial affluence or struggle, are made welcome at Newfield and are a valued part of our Newfield community.

Newfield Primary strives to meet the key recommendations that the Poverty Action Group research have noted as being important markers of supporting children from a low-income background include:

- Giving pupils the benefit of the doubt - school staff and pupils hold no assumptions about financial situations.
- Ensuring as far as possible an 'affordable school year', with a calendar of costs across a school year
- Spacing events out to try to avoid hotspots leading to increasing financial pressures.
- Fundraising activities which do not always ask families to contribute
- Lending resources without question
- Modifying expectations and tasks; offering/ providing support to access IT
- Having consistent expectations and practice between staff members on uniform, resources etc.
- Rewards and merits unaffected by issues relating to finances at home
- Anti-bullying alert to income-based bullying or stigma
- Greater poverty awareness among children
- Making sure families get financial entitlements
- Clothing grants, free meals
- Staff discretion and empathy
- Ensuring costs for trips are affordable
- Covering costs/ subsidising and supporting discounts where possible
- Systems in place where pupils/ parents/ carers do not feel embarrassed asking for help/ subsidy

Our policy covers four over-arching themes:

1. School Poverty: tackling poverty via a review of the 'Cost of the School Day' and the continued focus on tackling period poverty.
2. Food Poverty: increasing the uptake of free school meal and breakfast club provision.

3. Maximising Income: Financial Education for children and their families in partnership with South Lanarkshire's financial supports.

4. Fuel and Material Poverty: consideration of the impacts of these types of poverty and actions which must be taken.

These categories and what we do to support children and families are detailed below. However, our 'attitude to poverty' is a common thread in each of the categories. Many teachers, children and parents are aware of poverty and try to be sensitive to the challenges that low-income families face.

## **Section 1- School Poverty**

### **1.1 School Uniform**

School uniform is a practical way to mitigate against the effects of poverty. We believe that uniform promotes unity and pride within our school. The wearing of uniform reduces the potential for bullying and prevents individuals from becoming self-conscious or embarrassed about their clothing.

Our practice:

Our school uniform consists of:

- Navy or Grey trousers/grey skirt
- Navy cardigan or jumper
- Light blue shirt and school tie or light blue polo shirt

We have a variety of uniform suppliers and the most up to date information can be found on our school website.

- We do not insist on badged sweatshirts/polo shirts, therefore, parents are able to choose their preferred and most affordable uniform supplier, including local supermarkets.
- The school encourages parents and carers to apply for all appropriate benefits. We direct parents to South Lanarkshire's website for further details on how to apply for clothing grants.  
[https://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/info/200134/benefits\\_and\\_money\\_advice](https://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/info/200134/benefits_and_money_advice)
- We operate a preloved uniform bank which is available all year round for families to use. Access to uniform can be obtained via our Newfield Uniform Shop Facebook page or directly from the school. Families are encouraged to hand in uniform items that no longer fit for re-cycling.
- Our Parent Council is supportive of our work and assists the school to share this information with our wider parent forum.

### **1.2 Equipment and Resources**

Consideration should be given to the fact that many family budgets do not extend to the purchase of stationery items for school. This can extend to internet access, electronic devices and ink.

Our practice:

- Many of our children like to bring their own stationery equipment to school - the school provides all of this for everyone.
- In addition, our children are able to borrow a range of stationery, arts and craft materials if they need them for home learning.
- There is no charge for most of after school/lunchtime clubs. £1 is charged for clubs who take part in external festivals and games which require transport. This payment is encouraged but not chased up.
- All Pupil Equity Fund identified pupils are offered homework resources at the start of term to support with the completion of home tasks.

### **1.3 School Trips**

The cost associated with educational excursions can cause anxiety for families.

Our practice:

- We work closely with our families to ensure that poverty is not a barrier to participation in any school trips or outings.
- All school trips are charged a flat fee of £10 and this payment is on ParentPay from August to allow parents/carers the whole school session to pay.
- Class teachers will aim to bring learning experiences to school where possible.
- Class teachers will aim to use the immediate area / community or council resources to access learning experiences.
- Special clothing required for trips – teachers will consider the best option for this so as not to incur additional costs for parents.
- The school and Parent Council will work in partnership to access funds/grants where possible to reduce the cost of trips.
- In addition, we participate in a wide range of sporting activities promoted by South Lanarkshire Council and our Active Schools Coordinator. We subsidise transport costs associated with participation in these events.
- Fundraising activities are used to reduce transport costs associated with school trips.
- We do not charge our P7 pupils for any transition visits to secondary school.
- If a parent/carer is concerned about the cost of any activity we ask for the parent to discuss the concern with the Head Teacher (Laura Horn) or our Depute Head Teacher (Denise Corke). We are here to support you, and assure you of a listening ear and confidentiality. We can be contacted directly on 01698 792084 to arrange a mutually suitable time to discuss in person or over the phone.

#### **1.4 Charity, Fundraising Activities, School Shows and Themed Days**

Charity, fundraising activities and themed days can play a positive role in the life and ethos of a school. However, it should not be assumed that all children can afford to make even small donations. Many families simply do not have any additional funds to spare.

Our practice:

- We recognise that events planned for enjoyment can actually put added pressure on some of our families. The school will continue to look carefully at attendance and participation in these events in order to see if there are any poverty-related patterns that require further action.
- No child would be refused the opportunity to participate in any events, due to lack of payment.
- The school holds a Dress Down Day on the first Friday of each month. We ask for a donation of £1 to support these events. The money raised is used to pay for transport for sporting events and resources for special events within the school.
- The school covers the cost of Christmas parties and activities for all children- we allow pupils to wear a Christmas jumper (if they choose to do so). We ask for a donation towards our school fund. (£1)
- We host an annual Nativity for all P1 and Nursery. Costs associated with this are tickets which are limited to two per family.
- Occasionally we collect non-perishable items to donate to local foodbanks for distribution in our community.
- Our Parent Council organises one major fundraising events each session- either a Christmas Fair or a Spring Fair.
- Our Parent Council holds 4 discos in the evening and tickets are £3. The Parent Council then organise a free of charge disco at the end of term for all pupils.
- Our Parent Council has continued to support the school with costs- e.g. providing funding for P7 leavers hoodies, P7 day out alongside any resources and equipment the school require to provide high quality teaching and learning.

#### **1.5 Period Poverty**

Period poverty refers to a lack of access to sanitary protection due to financial constraints and is the reality affecting girls and young women across the country. Improving menstrual health management (MHM, also known as 'period poverty') can substantially improve girls' education, health and wellbeing.

Our practice:

- The school provides a range of sanitary protection products.

## **Section 2 - Food Poverty**

There has been a huge rise in the amount of young people who are affected by hunger in their daily lives. Their ability to learn can be seriously impacted upon and their health and wellbeing undermined.

Our practice:

- All P1-P5 school meals are free.
- Breakfast club or Toast To Go is available, free of charge, for all pupils every day.
- Milk is available daily, free for those in receipt of FME.
- We encourage and direct parents to South Lanarkshire's website to apply for free school meals. We remind parents/ carers to do this on an annual basis and offer support to complete the form if a parent/carers is having difficulty with this.
- Around, 38% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. We estimate that most of our P6-7 pupils who are eligible for Free School Meals take up their entitlement, however, there may be some P1-5 pupils whose parents have not claimed this entitlement due to meals for these children being free for everyone. Moving forward, we will continue to build on our positive relationships with our families to ensure that all those who should receive a Free School Meal take up their entitlement. This also affects Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) from the Scottish Government.
- Where appropriate, we work with other agencies to support our families.
- For families living in poverty, we will offer support in partnership with local charities such as St Ninians' Foodbank and, where appropriate, Health and Social Work who can give advice and support.

## **Section 3- Maximising Income**

In Newfield Primary School, we offer Financial Education and advice for children, young people and their families in the following ways:

- Finance week held annually in school

Financial support for families can be found via The Money Matters Advice Service. This is a free and confidential service that helps people living in South Lanarkshire or working for South Lanarkshire Council claim benefits and deal with debt. They give free unbiased advice on a range of benefit and debt issues and will work with you by discussing all your options and come up with a plan together. We can help with:

- the cost-of-living crisis including advice on energy arrears
- gas and electricity top up vouchers
- debt advice including mortgage and rent arrears and dealing with creditors
- benefits advice
- budgeting

## **Section 4- Fuel and Material Poverty**

There are a number of young people who are living in homes without access to adequate heating or electricity. Their health and ability to learn will be adversely impacted upon by such an environment. Many children often do not have access to basic necessities such as clothing, bedding towels, toiletries and toothbrushes. Children may also be denied age appropriate stimulus and toys due to poverty, thus impacting on their development and learning.

Children are not afforded opportunities to participate in their communities, or develop socially, as parents have no means to finance activities or to pay for transportation to free activities within their area.

Where we see need in our school community we endeavour to support and provide essentials.

If any family requires advice or support with anything regarding financial support or worries regarding the cost of the school day, please contact the school, in confidence.

School Contact Information Laura Horn, Head Teacher or Denise Corke, Depute Head Teacher on 01698 792084 or via email at [office@newfield-pri.s-lanark.sch.uk](mailto:office@newfield-pri.s-lanark.sch.uk)

We work closely with our Learning Community colleagues to ensure that pupils across the Learning Community have a similar experience and are not at a disadvantage depending on the Primary school they attend.

**Date of last review and reprint: June 2023**  
**Will be reviewed annually and updated where required.**

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