



Challenge, Equality & Opportunity

Poverty Proofing Statement

Context

There are many different definitions of poverty. In September 2018, the Social Metrics Commission (SMC) set out to develop a poverty indicator that goes beyond a simple measure of people's relative income by taking into account core living costs such as housing, childcare and the extra costs of disability. It also accounts for people's wider resources, such as savings, in assessing whether they can be defined as in poverty. By taking into account total household resources, the new measure redefines who is in poverty. For example, a family with relatively high income could be counted as in poverty because high unavoidable living costs (such as rent and childcare) leave them unable to afford basic material necessities. Equally, a household with low income but a high level of financial savings would not be in poverty because they would be able to afford basic necessities using available resources. It also highlights that disabled people, single parents and people without a job or in insecure zero-hours employment are proportionately much more likely to be in poverty.

There are currently 4.1 million children in the UK living in poverty, this is expected to increase to 5.2 million by 2022.

In the north East, 35% of children are living in poverty. In our own ward (Parklands), 19.8% of children are living in poverty. In the UK, 4.9 million people go without food for at least one day per week as a result of poverty. 70% of children living in poverty have at least one person working in their household. Only 1 in 8 children will escape the poverty trap. By the time children reach GCSEs, there is a typical attainment gap of 1.5 years between those living in poverty and those not.

It is now known that COVID-19 and the current cost of living crisis have had a negative impact on these numbers and that many more families are living in poverty and many more also under significant financial pressure.

Impact in School

We know that children living in poverty have barriers to learning which have an impact on their progress and attainment. We are committed to doing all we can to provide the stepping stones which help children to meet their aspirations. Importantly, research shows that living in poverty does not affect children's aspirations, but rather that it makes it much

more difficult to achieve them. We want our school to be a community which does not reflect the society in which we live but is a model of the society we want to have.

What can we do?

Following work with Children NE, we have looked at our school provision through the eyes of the children in our school family who are living in poverty. As far as we can, we want to take away opportunities for children to feel 'different' to the other children in school. We will not make assumptions about whether or not children are living in poverty and we will not tolerate a culture of blame towards any families or individuals.

We will:

- Consider the impact of non-uniform days and the collection of money from children
- Provide lunch bags (to replace the brown paper bags) for KS2 FSM when children are on visits
- Where possible, make the purchase of uniform easier
- Consider affordability of visits and trips
- Make cash collections and payments as invisible as possible (through ParentMail and awareness in classrooms)
- Consider the difficulties of families living in poverty when we set homework tasks, competitions etc and make changes so that everyone is included
- Provide PE kits for children who forget (in standard school bags and without the knowledge of other children)
- Provide water bottles for children who regularly don't bring them to school
- Provide pencil cases in KS2 and not allow children to provide their own (in both KSs)
- Use pupil voice to inform planning and future poverty proofing measures
- Always consider how our planned provision is experienced by those who are living in poverty and how we can make school a safer and happier experience for all

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