

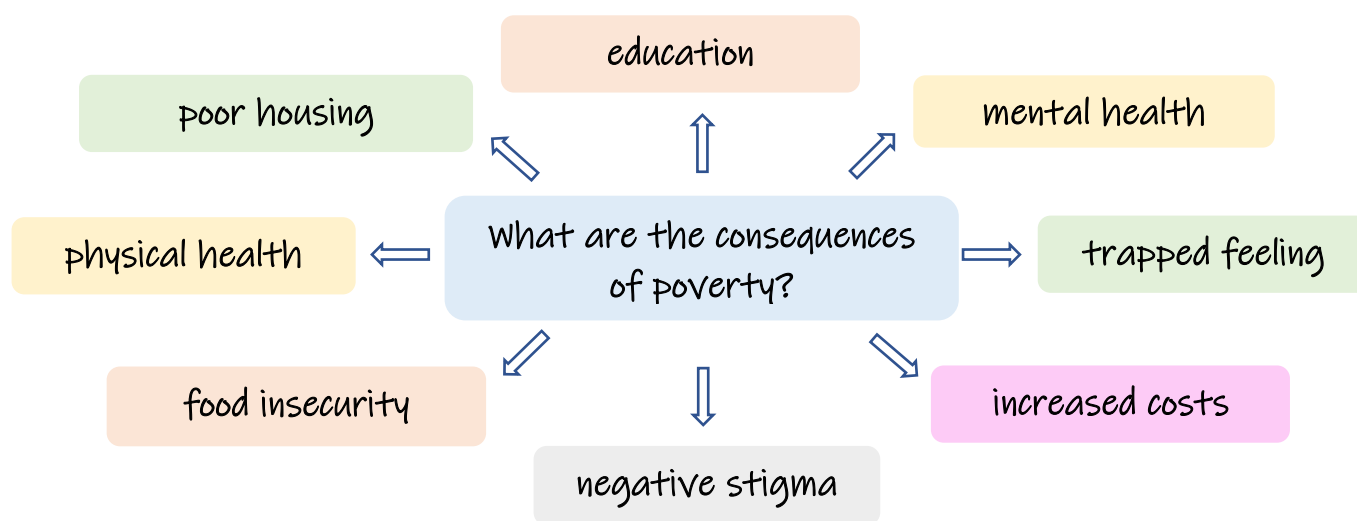
# Poverty Proofing the School Day



*'The effects of child poverty should not be underestimated. Experiencing child poverty can undermine the health, wellbeing and educational attainment of children.'*

(Child Poverty Action Group)

At St Aloysius Catholic Infant and Junior Schools, we aim to provide all children with experiences and opportunities that enable them to achieve their full potential, have fun and prepare them for life beyond primary school. These opportunities sometimes have a cost attached to them and we believe that no family should ever be in a position where they struggle financially because of the 'Cost of the School Day'. We are committed to ensuring that every child at our school has equal access to all opportunities available to them, regardless of financial position, and have worked hard to identify and overcome the barriers to learning that children from families with less financial resources face. Government figures indicate that in the UK, 9 children in an average class of 30(30%) are living in poverty, is important that we strive to remove financial barriers to education; supporting our families as much as we can within our community.



## Our Aim:

- Relieve the pressures families may face due to the Cost of the School Day.
- Ensure that there are no barriers to learning caused by financial issues and that every child has equal access to opportunities at school.
- Demonstrate the approaches taken to minimise poverty stigma.
- Promote the assistance we can provide to families to help them access financial support beyond the school day.

## How do we reduce the 'cost of the school day'?

We are aware that, at times, families within our community may require help or advice linked to financial issues. These issues may also have an impact on a family's health and wellbeing and it is our aim to provide support if we are able to. By working together, our community can get it right for every family. Details are provided below regarding measures we have in place to support our families:

### **Working in Partnership**

- We aim to work in partnership with our families and we ensure that they know they are able to contact us confidentially if they require any support.
- We are continually establishing links with local community groups, charities, organisations and businesses who can support families in need.
- We provide parents with contact details for organisations, such as South Tyneside Crisis Support Team who may be able to offer support or we will make contact on their behalf.
- We support parents in completing application forms, if required.

### **Food and Snacks**

- We encourage parents to apply for free school meals and support them with this process.
- An electronic link to Free School Meal application is regularly included in newsletters.
- Fruit/toast is available for any child who complains of feeling hungry or who may not have a snack.
- We provide water bottles for those children who may not be able to bring one from home.
- We promote attendance at the Breakfast Club and promote school lunches so that children may have nutritious meals at little or no cost.
- Snacks are available in school for children who do not bring one with them.
- Prior to each school holiday, we ask for food donations from parents and local businesses. We make food hampers available to parents the week before the school holidays to ensure that families have supplies and to help tackle holiday hunger.

### **Clothing**

- We ensure that parents are aware of school clothing grants and the application procedures. We support parents to complete these if required.
- At the end of the school year, we ask parents to donate good quality school uniforms, shoes, coats and school bags that we launder and clean for their new owners.
- We positively promote the wearing of the school uniform to create a school identity. In addition, this helps prevent competition among pupils for the latest designer clothing/footwear.
- At our Summer and Christmas Fayres, our Mini Vinnies set up clothing rails and boxes that parents may select items from but if they would rather be more discrete, we operate an ordering system where a form can be filled in and sent to school in an envelope or parents may email/call the school. Items will then be put into school bags to take home or can be collected at the office.
- If a child regularly comes into school without uniform, we can provide uniform items and PE kit.
- We ask parents to donate Christmas jumpers, Christmas party clothes, Halloween costumes and dressing up clothes so that we can make these available when we have celebrations.

### **Christmas**

- We ask for donations from parents, local businesses and charities of food, clothing and toys so that we can provide Christmas hampers for families.
- We ask identified families for details of the types of toys their children would like and, if we have not already received suitable items, we will send emails to ask if anyone has these pre-loved items to donate. If this is unsuccessful, we will try to purchase suitable toys so the children receive gifts they would like.
- We ask for donations of pre-loved Christmas jumpers and Christmas party clothes so that every child has something suitable for Christmas Jumper Day and their class party.

### **In the Classroom**

- We provide stationary and other essentials in the classroom which all children use throughout the day.
- Pupils are not asked to write and focus on what they have done in the holidays, at weekends or out of school as this can be problematic for pupils living in poverty who may not have had as many experiences or opportunities as their peers.

### Out of School Learning

- Staff bear in mind that not all children have access to a computer, tablet or the internet when setting home learning tasks.
- Staff bear in mind that not all children have access to resources such as arts and crafts when setting home learning tasks and will ensure that all children are given, or offered, the resources they need to complete a task.
- We are aware that it can be difficult for parents to meet the cost of after school clubs. We encourage our families to speak to us in confidence if this is the case.

### Charity, Fundraising and Community

- We keep non-uniform/dress down days to a minimum and consider carefully the theme to ensure no additional cost to parents. These days are always donation only and no one is excluded from taking part if they do not have a donation.
- Children are asked not to bring sweets/treats/cakes in to celebrate their birthdays as this leads to peer pressure, does not support our healthy school status and is challenging for pupils with allergies etc...

### School Trips and Activities

- We always give parents and carers as much notice as we can of activities and trips to allow time to save and pay.
- We always liaise with families who may be facing difficulties and agree a payment plan which may exceed the date of the activity/event
- We never read out the names of children who have not paid, if necessary, the office will communicate directly with parents.
- Residential trips are available to all of our children. We aim to give parents approximately 12 months to pay in order to help spread the cost. In addition, we look at any requests for financial help to support families and ensure that all pupils have access to all opportunities.



Because growing up can be hard

