

Summary

This document outlines the universal strategies adopted by Primary academies within the Trust to poverty-proof the school day, ensuring inclusivity and accessibility for all students regardless of financial circumstances. Key measures include limiting branded uniform items, providing second-hand uniforms, encouraging Free School Meal applications, offering subsidised breakfast clubs, and adhering to healthy snack and packed lunch policies. Additionally, essential educational resources such as books, stationery, and IT equipment are provided to ensure equitable access to learning.

Poverty Proofing the Primary School Day:



In our Primary academies we are committed to ensuring that all children, regardless of their economic circumstances, can fully access and enjoy an education that goes beyond the curriculum. This document outlines our approach to removing financial barriers that may impact pupils and families, fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment.

As part of our poverty proofing pledge, there are strategies that we have adopted across all primaries within our Trust. In addition to this there are a bank of ideas that academies can choose from to further personalise their offer. We are constantly challenging our approach and thinking and will continue to consider ways we can ensure access for all.

What we do:



Our universal approaches to poverty proofing the school day

All Primary Academies have adopted the following approaches:

1. Uniforms

- We limit the number of branded items to no more than three per academy (a tie is additional/optional)
- We provide access to second-hand uniform
- We don't allow logos on clothing as part of the non-branded uniform (this includes trainers & PE KITS)
- We offer support with equipment for school swimming lessons (such as hats)

2. School Meals

- We actively promote and encourage Free School Meal (FSM) applications
- Universal Free School Meals (UFSM) are available across all schools in EYFS and KS1.
- We offer breakfast clubs to provide a healthy start to the day free of charge.
- KS1 all receive daily Free Fruit, with any surplus shared with KS2.
- Snacks provided from home can only consist of fruit or veg (no savoury or sweet snacks such as crisps, biscuits or cereal bars etc)
- Packed lunches must conform with the national standards found in the schools packed lunch policy
- We ensure that every child in Reception and KS1 has a universal free school meal
- We provide a healthy snack for all pupils for free or at a minimal cost

3. Equipment

- We provide school water bottles/ cups and children do not bring their own in
- We provide a free book bag when children start
- We have a bank of donated items for specific trips such as wellies for a farm trip for parents to loan

3. Educational Resources

- We provide all essential learning materials such as books, stationary, and IT equipment as needed
- We do not allow children to bring in their own equipment e.g. pencil cases/ fiddle toys
- We avoid expectations for families to purchase items for homework or projects
- PE/Swimming bags only to be used on set days
- School logo bags are provided for school trips or disposable bags.
- Book bags are optional; schools will provide large zip wallets if required for homework and reading books
- Rucksacks or any form of additional bags are not permitted from September 2025.

4. Trips and Enrichment Activities

- We subsidise or fully fund educational trips, ensuring no child is excluded due to financial reasons
- Where trips require a payment, we give ample notice to allow parents to save up or pay in instalments
- We organise free or low-cost extracurricular activities

5. Events and Celebrations

- We limit the number of charity or fundraising events to no more than 1 per half term
- We ensure that any donations for events are given anonymously and allow all to participate
- We don't have non-school uniform days but engage in 'themed' days instead
- Where there is a specific dress up event we will support with items/outfits to borrow, opportunities to make things in school or we will provide the equipment to make things. These days are not considered non-school uniform days and pupils are not permitted to come in home clothes if they are not in a themed costume

6. PTA events

- We ensure that costs are kept to a minimum
- We spread these out across the year, with a maximum of 5
- We ensure that within school fairs there is always a free element/activity

7. Homework and Revision Support

- We provide access to technology in breakfast and/or lunchtime or after school clubs to support with online homework
- We provide free revision guides for pupils or bundles can be purchased at a subsidised cost

8. Community Partnerships

- We establish connections with food banks to support families facing food insecurity
- We provide free period products
- We provide food parcels through breakfast providers where they are available

9. School events

- We do not charge parents for events that children are involved in e.g. performances, sporting events
- We provide costumes for school productions and will only ask for voluntary contributions of items/payment
- We source school photo companies that provide the best value for money and a range of options for different price ranges

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10. Y6 leaver events

- We will always have a free element for Y6 leavers which is decided by the academy. This may be a trip, party or gift
- Where items require payment (e.g. leavers' hoodies) we give plenty of notice and/or allow for payments in instalments

11. Communication and Support

- We maintain open, non-judgmental communication with families to understand individual circumstances
- We share information about available support services and community resources

Staff Responsibilities

All staff are expected to:

- Be aware of the challenges faced by families experiencing financial difficulties.
- Treat all pupils with respect and fairness, avoiding any assumptions based on economic background.
- Proactively identify and report barriers to inclusion.

Monitoring and Evaluation

We will regularly review our approach through:

- Feedback from families, pupils, and staff.
- Analysis of participation rates in school activities and uptake of FSM and other support services.
- Ongoing assessment of the effectiveness of support measures.
- Sharing of best practice across our academies.

By poverty-proofing the school day, we aim to create a nurturing, equitable environment where every child can thrive and achieve their potential.

Possible Misconceptions:



Misconception: We can't charge for anything.

We need to consider what we charge for and how much we charge and ensure that enough notice time is given for parents to pay. We can support where parents cannot pay. We need to consider how payments are made.

Misconception: We need to reduce our cultural capital experiences so as not to put a burden on parents.

We need to offer all children an enriching experience that extends beyond the curriculum and look for innovative ways for this to be inclusive to all and not reduce our offer.

Further reading:

Children North East

<https://children-ne.org.uk/poverty-proofing-the-school-day/>

Healthy Suffolk

<https://www.healthysuffolk.org.uk/tackling-poverty/tackling-poverty/poverty-proofing>

School Impact Awards

<https://schoolimpactawards.com/poverty-proofing-schools#:~:text=Move%20away%20from%20the%20idea,than%20having%20dressing%20Dup%20days.>

Poverty Proofing the School Day - NASUWT]

<https://www.nasuwt.org.uk/asset/E7DC0E21%2D39A7%2D4DB9%2D946D4AE3A8F23279>

Poverty proofing schools - Press Office - Newcastle University

<https://www.ncl.ac.uk/press/articles/latest/2024/03/povertyproofingschools/>

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