

# Tackling the Impact of Poverty on Education Programme



PLANT YNG NGHYMRU  
CHILDREN IN WALES

## Introducing the 'new' Price of Pupil Poverty Governors Guide



21<sup>st</sup> June 2023



Ariennir gan  
**Lywodraeth Cymru**  
Funded by  
**Welsh Government**

# Poverty and Children's Rights



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Children in Wales is the **national umbrella body** for **organisations and individuals** who work with **children, young people and their families** in Wales. We work **closely with Welsh Government** and others in Wales to ensure that **children's rights** are at the **forefront of policy and decision making**.



# Every Child has The Right to a 'Free' Education



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From UNCRC:

- **The right to the best possible health and nutritious food** (Article 24)
- **The right to an adequate standard of living** (Article 27)
- **The right to play and leisure opportunities** (Article 31)
- **The right to benefit from social security** (Article 26)
- **The rights to fulfil their potential** (Article 6)

## Four Purposes of the Curriculum for Wales

**Ambitious, capable learners** ready to learn throughout their lives

**Enterprising, creative contributors**, ready to play a full part in life and work

**Ethical, informed citizens** of Wales and the world

**Healthy, confident individuals**, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society



# CROESO WELCOME



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1. Background & Context
2. The impact on Learners & Families
3. Tackling Poverty In Education
4. Introducing the New Governors Guide
5. What can you do – Solutions & Recommendations





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# What is Poverty?



# Poverty is:



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A long-term state of not having sufficient resources to afford food, reasonable living conditions or amenities or to participate in activities (such as access to attractive neighbourhoods and open spaces) that are taken for granted by others in their society.

*(Welsh Government Child Poverty Strategy- Progress Report, Dec 2019)*

The key indicator of child poverty is the percentage of children living in households below 60% of the median UK household income (After Housing Costs).

Poverty means stress, pressure, difficult choices – ‘heating or eating’ - and **exclusion from everyday activities** for families.



# Child Poverty In Wales



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4 in 10  
children  
living in  
poverty in  
Wales

- Levels in parts of Wales are some of the highest in UK
  - 700,000 people in Wales in Poverty
- 140,000 children live in families that receive income-related benefits
- Growing number of children in poverty from working families



[www.endchildpoverty.org.uk](http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk)

# Who is living in poverty in Wales?



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200,000  
children  
in Wales  
live in  
poverty

- Children of lone-parent families
- Children in large families (more than 3 children)
- Children growing up in households where there is no-one in full-time employment
- Children from some minority ethnic communities
- Children in households with a disabled child or adult
- Children of migrant workers/asylum seeking children
- Children in families where at least one person is working



# Impact of Covid 19 & the Cost of Living Crisis



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Impact  
on  
children  
is greater  
than ever

*“Families we have supported have children who are not thriving physically, having an impact on their growth, development, and ability to function daily in schools and at home.” (Children in Wales)*



**‘Schools are far too expensive for people who can barely afford food’**

Parental quote (Written evidence PA56 Children’s Commissioner for Wales; WP Pupil Absence Report Nov ‘22)

# Impact of Covid 19 on attendance

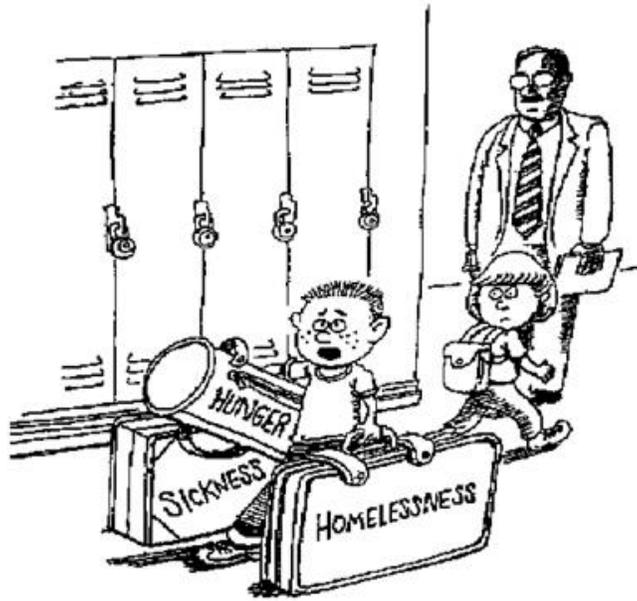
Broad trend  
of lower  
attendance  
post  
pandemic

Children In Wales Annual Child and Family Poverty Survey 2021 found bullying due to poverty a particular issue:

*“leading to lower self-esteem; hungry, leading to inability to concentrate; anxious and worried about their families’ finances; and often unable to afford the cost of school uniforms, which again regularly led to feelings of not fitting in and being equal to their peers.”*



“Could someone help me with these?  
I’m late for math class.”



## What's it really like for those in poverty?

- ‘Hidden’ costs of day to day school life can be problematic
- Shame & stigma
- Children miss out on opportunities

Class of  
25 Likely 7  
of those  
pupils are  
in poverty

CPAG 2020

Every Child has The Right to a ‘Free’ Education

# Child Poverty Stories



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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TbUjZbMu7DI>

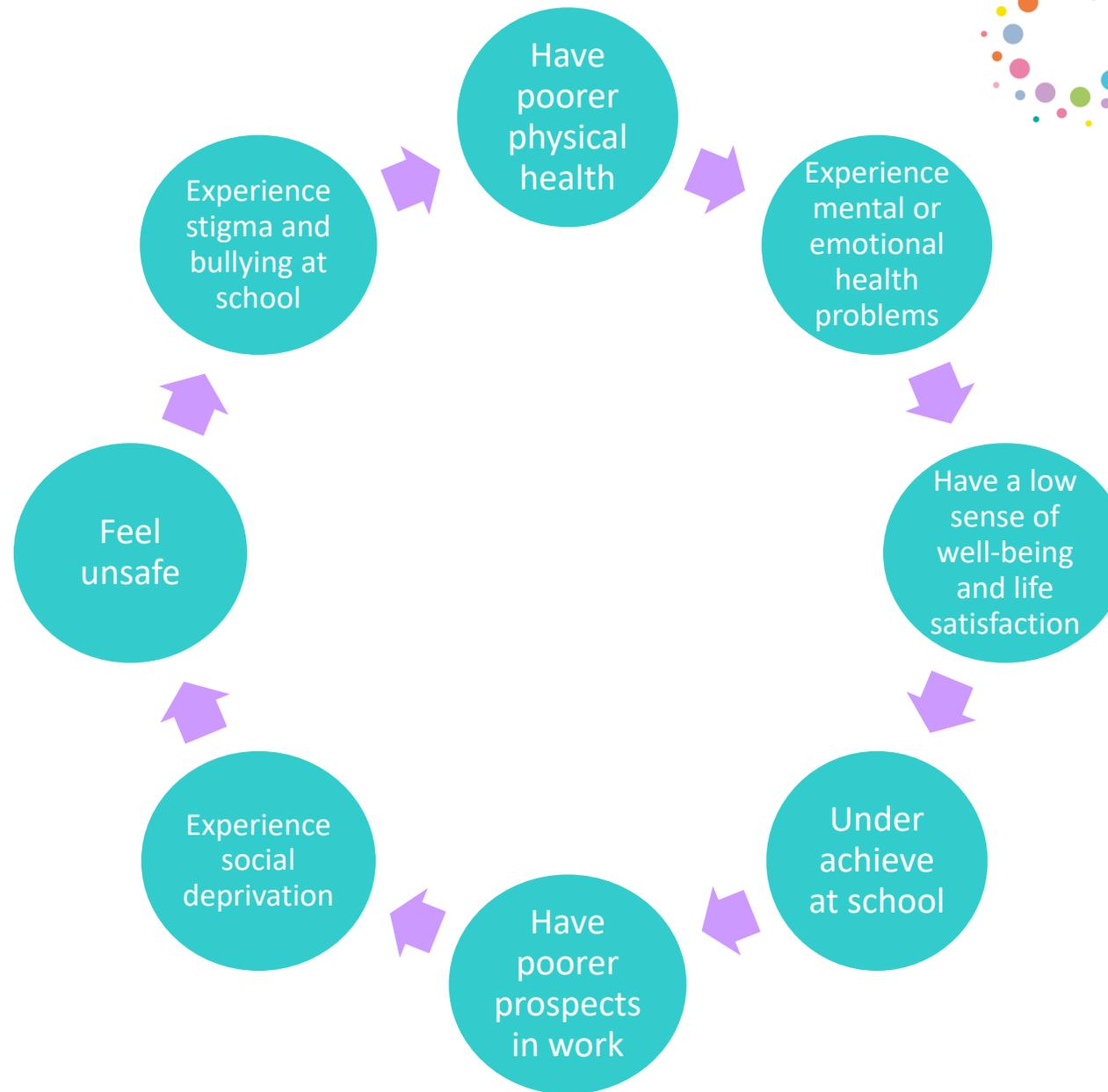
You Tube 9<sup>th</sup> Dec 2019  
National Education Union



# Impact on Children



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27% of children aged 10-15 receiving free school meals reported often being lonely, compared to 18% of non-FSM pupils.

# Practical challenges



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**That children and young people from lower income families may have to face:**

- Right clothes/uniforms
- Travelling & transport costs
- Having the right resources and equipment for lessons
- Stigma and isolation
- Affording trips
- Food and the ability to pay for it
- Extra- curricular activities
- Home learning

*“If all your friends or people you know go to after school clubs, school trips, that kind of isolates you from them. You’re singled out, you’re not with them, just a spare person”*  
*Boy, age 15 (CPAG)*

# The Guides



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- A resource for schools & settings in Wales
- Practical steps and solutions to a whole school approach
- Remove Barriers and 'cost' of learning
- Covers 5 Key Areas that impact those in poverty in a school setting



## The Price of Pupil Poverty

Taking a Whole School Approach to Improving the Well-being of children from low income and disadvantaged families

Introduction	0
Understanding Poverty	1
School Uniform and Clothing	2
Food and Hunger	3
Participation in the Life of the School	4
Home-School Relationship	5



# Creating Positive Change



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*“It is a very valuable process and can definitely have a positive impact on pupils' wellbeing and educational attainment”*

*“There has been positive feedback from parents regarding changes we have made since taking part and we are continuing to work on actions that have arisen following the evaluation of the action plan”*

*“As a school I thought that we supported all learners, but through evaluating practice we realized that there was so much more we could do to help our families and ultimately support our pupils to be in a place ready to learn.”*

*“We have a greater understanding of some of the barriers to learning and have amended some policies and procedures.”*

poverty



*“It has shifted our culture as a whole school so that poverty and its impact remains a focus for us all”*

# Ideas in Practice

*Now all items in the canteen are labelled, priced and clear*

It was agreed that the Year 6 pupils could raise money that would be used to buy everyone a hoodie. Families were asked to contribute £5. The children then focused their Enterprise activity on raising money so that everyone could have a hoodie.

You are able to come into school and take a jumper or cardigan free of charge! They are organised in boxes for each age and can be found in the main reception area.

*Provide information on local schemes and food banks*

Include poverty awareness in the school curriculum

On trip days, children who have free school meals can choose a box from a lunchbox bank to put their packed lunch bag in.

“We provide hygiene packs for Year 5 and 6 children made up from community donations and run workshops to develop understanding”

**Audit who takes part in after school activities**

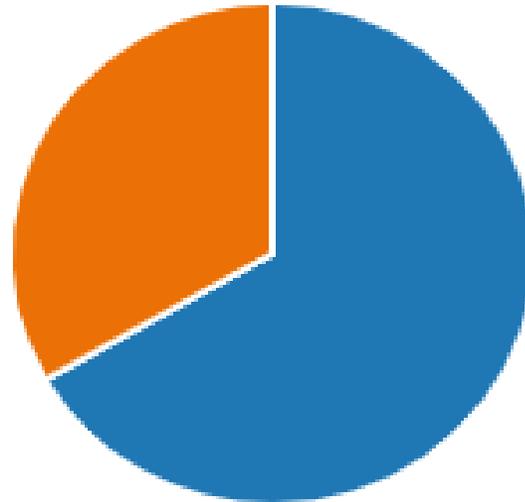
***“We recycle educational toys to families in need”***

**“We have a school uniform ‘swap shop’ Facebook page organised by parents. This is open to parents at the High School also, meaning that uniform for children between 4 and 16 years of age is readily available”**

# Impact

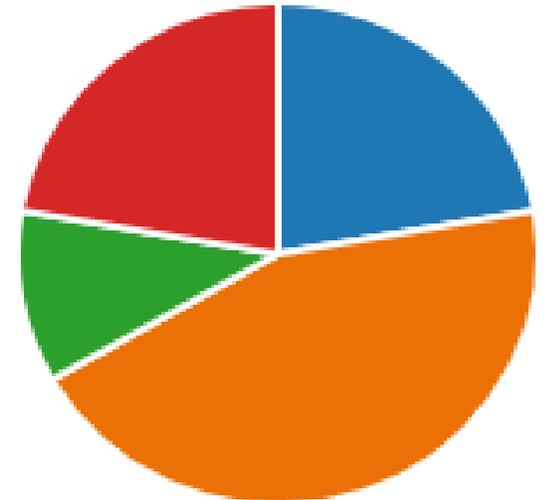
Whole school approach to thinking differently in relation to poverty and barriers

- Big change
- Some Change
- Neutral
- Little change
- No change



How confident are you that the school day for your pupil & families is less costly as a result of this work

- Extremely confident
- Very confident
- Neutral
- Somewhat confident
- Not so confident



## THE PRICE OF PUPIL POVERTY

What does this mean and what can schools do?

### Impact on learners

Attending school without the correct uniform can lead to worry and anxiety. Feelings of embarrassment, potential bullying and being pitied by peers and school staff heighten the stress for learners.

### Key areas to consider

Policy:

Recycle Schemes:

Affordability:

Cause for Concern:



### Some questions to consider

Consult with parents, learners and governors

Consider flexibility when adhering to uniform policy

Consider how uniform infringements are handled by staff

Consider ways uniform could be made less expensive for all families

Recycling of lost property/items of uniform that have been outgrown or are no longer needed

Provide training for staff to recognise signs of poverty

Recognise/Identify, monitor and support learners from lower income families in a sensitive and positive manner



The guides can be found on the Welsh Government's Education website: [HWB](http://www.hwb.gov.uk)

For further information please contact: [pupilpoverty@childreninwales.org.uk](mailto:pupilpoverty@childreninwales.org.uk)  
029 2034 2434 | [www.childreninwales.org.uk](http://www.childreninwales.org.uk)

Tackling the Impact of Poverty on Education Programme

### Understanding Poverty 1

Area of Focus	Mostly/ Not at all/ Could improve	Evidence/Comments
1.1 Early identification and Monitoring		
Do you know the children in your school that may be experiencing poverty?		
Do you collect information on pupils in the school around poverty?		
Do you use this information for setting up appropriate interventions?		
Does the school have detailed knowledge of the families, their needs and their degree of engagement with learning?		

# Tackling the Impact of Poverty on Education Resources for Schools

You are able to come into school and take a jumper or cardigan free of charge! They are organised in boxes for each age and can be found in the main reception area.

"We have a school uniform 'swap shop' Facebook page organised by parents. This is open to parents at the High School also, meaning that uniform for children between 4 and 16 years of age is readily available"

"We provide 1 free school sweatshirt and 2 free school polo shirts to families starting in Reception"

We have worked with the Local Authority to track and contact parents who have not responded to their entitlement to Free School Meals

"We provide hygiene packs for Year 5 and 6 children made up from community donations and run workshops to develop understanding"

be used to buy everyone a hoodie. Families were asked to contribute £5. The children then focused their Enterprise activity on raising money so that everyone could have a hoodie.

"We recycle educational toys to families in need"

lunchbox bank to put their packed lunch bag in. priced and clear

Pupils in Year 13 set up a snack shop, with healthy items available at a discount rate with money raised through fundraising



# The Toolkit for Schools

## When signed up to the programme

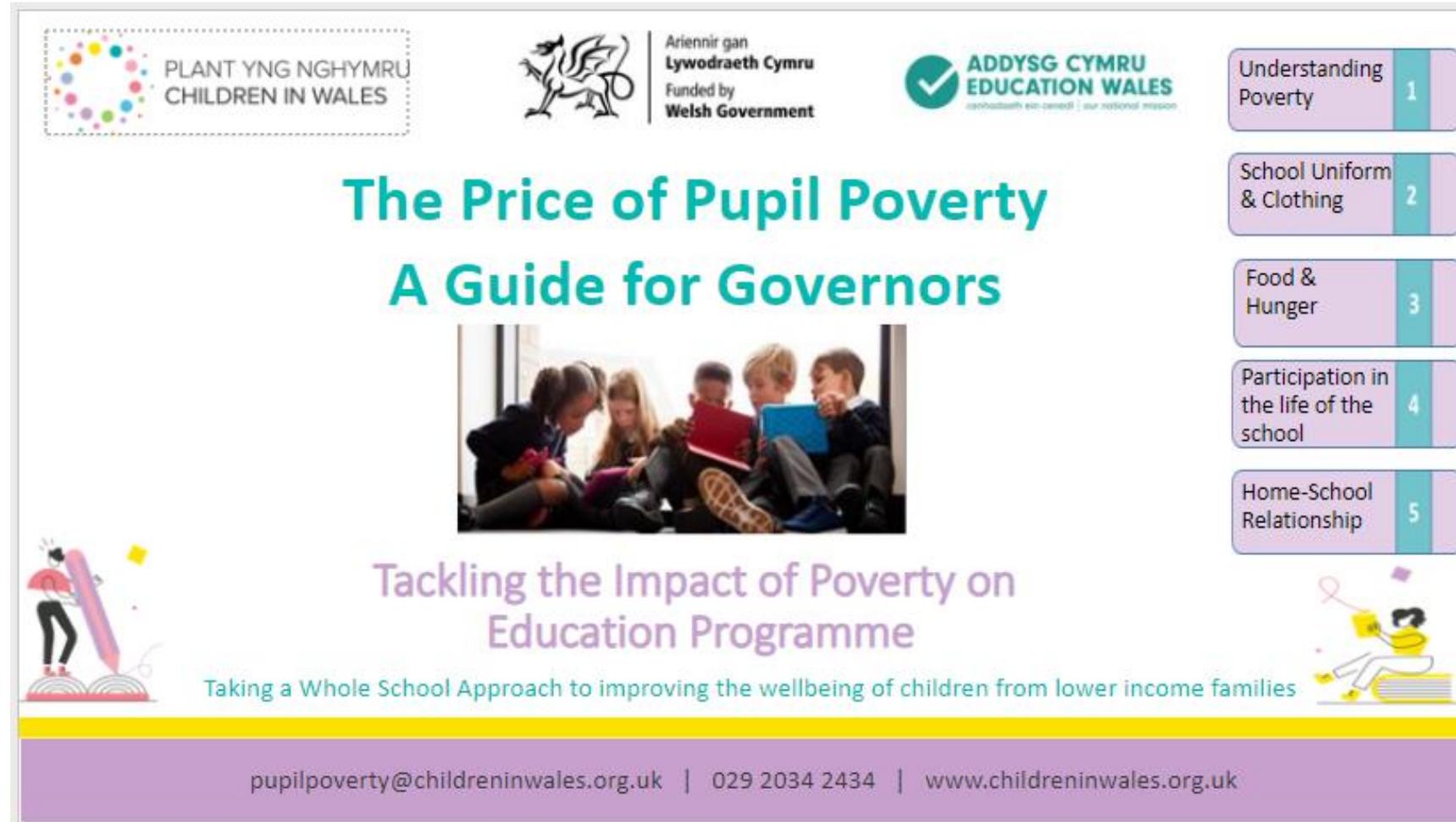


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'How' to Guide	This sets out the 5 steps to implement a whole school approach to tackling the impact of poverty in the school setting
Checklist	This acts as a self audit to identify things the school is already doing and things which they could improve upon
Action Plan Example	This gives the school some ideas for how to address the action plan for their school
Action Plan Template	The chance to outline and record the school's development plan and progress
Community Platform	This gives the school access to a place to share and learn about best practice for tackling poverty with other schools
Parents Survey	Parents and guardians can complete this to help the school to identify what the school can be doing to be mindful of the cost of the school day

# The Governors Guides

- A **new** resource for school governors in Wales
- Practical steps and solutions to a whole school approach
- Remove Barriers and ‘cost’ of learning
- Covers 5 Key Areas
- Draws upon Welsh Government **legislation, policies and guidance**

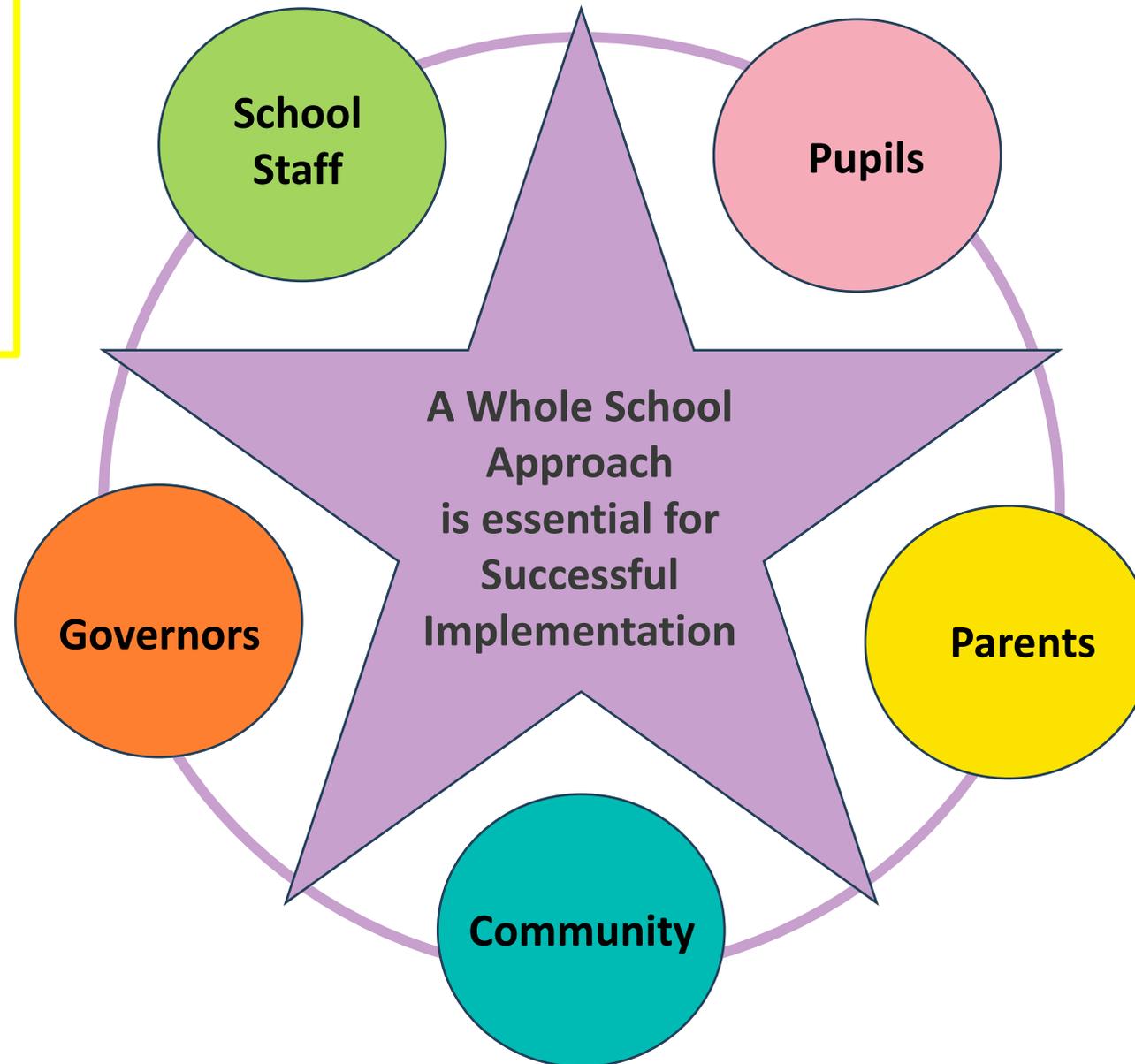


The cover of the report 'The Price of Pupil Poverty: A Guide for Governors' features the following elements:

- Logos:** Plant Yng Nghymru Children in Wales, Ariennir gan Lywodraeth Cymru (Funded by Welsh Government), and Addysg Cymru Education Wales.
- Title:** 'The Price of Pupil Poverty' and 'A Guide for Governors' in large teal text.
- Image:** A photograph of five children sitting on the floor, reading books together.
- Subtitle:** 'Tackling the Impact of Poverty on Education Programme' in purple text.
- Tagline:** 'Taking a Whole School Approach to improving the wellbeing of children from lower income families' in teal text.
- Table of Contents:** A vertical list of five key areas, each with a numbered teal bar: 1. Understanding Poverty, 2. School Uniform & Clothing, 3. Food & Hunger, 4. Participation in the life of the school, 5. Home-School Relationship.
- Decorative Elements:** Illustrations of a person with a large pencil and a person with a large book.
- Contact Information:** pupilpoverty@childreninwales.org.uk | 029 2034 2434 | www.childreninwales.org.uk



*“a whole school approach is essential as you need all staff on board and things clearly set in place within your policies.”*



# What Governors can do

- Review policies
- Ensure regular updates with regard to the use of the Pupil Development Grant
- Involvement in school self-evaluation, improvement and accountability
- **Ensure that Equity/Tackling Poverty is a standard agenda at Governor meetings**



## Equity/Tackling Poverty as a Standing agenda item in Governor meetings can:

- Allow space to **focus and understand** what's really going on for their school community and how best to **support**
- Use this knowledge and understanding to **inform decision and policy making** at governing body level
- View the **operational decision making** and practice of the school through this lens to **advocate** for children from lower income families and their rights
- Make **suggestions** based on knowledge and understanding as to how to make the school experience **more equitable**
- Enable **constant and ongoing consideration** and **review**



# What Governors can do

**Be aware of and ensure your school regards the Welsh Government Statutory Guidance on School Uniforms including ensuring due regard is given to:**

- Cost and affordability
- Practical considerations when considering introducing/changing uniforms
- Affordability, Access and Availability of Uniforms
- Ø Consider if the school logo is essential?
- Ø Consider how much flexibility there is and how uniform infringements are handled by staff
- Ø Ensure that schools are raising awareness of the Schools Essentials Grant for those eligible



# What Governors can do:

- **Ensure regular updates on the uptake of free school meals** and take part in discussions on how to ensure that as many families as possible take up this entitlement
- **Find out how lunch times are managed** and what measures are put in place to ensure that no child misses out on a school meal due to lack of access or time
- **Consider breakfast provision.**
- **Establish what arrangements are made for the statutory obligation to provide free drinking water onsite** and how this is made freely available
- **Find out if the school takes part in School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP)** and what take up is like amongst lower income families.



# What Governors can do:

Participation in  
the life of the  
school

4

- **Ensure regular updates and reports on how the Pupil Development Grant is spent** at the school, why it has been used this way and on how it has proved to be effective.
- **Undertake an audit on the fundraising and celebration events that** are held at the school **over a year** and look to implementing a policy that limits these to a certain number and ensures that they are spread evenly.
- **Review the charging policy of the school.** Trips related to the curriculum are not chargeable and families of children in receipt of free school meals should not be charged for any trips in line with [Welsh Government Charging Guidance](#).



# What Governors can do:

- **Review the school's homework policy** to ensure it is inclusive and gives consideration to the ability of all learners to complete homework tasks at home.
- **Consider when the school holds homework clubs**, to make them accessible to learners whose family might struggle to afford up-to-date IT equipment, but also be mindful that these same learners might miss out on a school meal at lunchtime if clubs are held during this period.
- **Appoint a Family Engagement Officer**, possibly funded through the Pupil Development Grant or via the local authority, to build links with parents/carers who face barriers and have little contact with the school.
- **Make links with the wider community**, to encourage family learning by signposting to other services.
- **Look at establishing a Parent Council** to help inform and support ways to improve parental engagement and ensure that their voices are heard in decision making, both at school leadership and governing body level.



# Key Considerations when considering policies/practise:



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Reduce Stigma

Assumptions  
about what  
people can  
afford

Hidden Costs

Improve  
wellbeing  
of *all* pupils

Remove  
Barriers to  
Learning

Understanding  
of the Impact

Not Just About  
FSM Pupils



# Ideas in practice from other schools

Attending the **whole school poverty awareness session** really helped governors to better see issues from the perspective of our families. We are definitely more mindful of these now when making decisions about how we run things at the school.



We provide **one free school sweatshirt and two free school polo shirts** to families **starting in Reception** so no one needs to worry about initial costs.

Reviewing our **school uniform policy** using the **Welsh Government statutory guidance** led us to **removing the requirement for branded uniform**. Now the school colours are all that are needed, making it much more **affordable**.

A **parent council** has been formed following a **consultation evening** about **improving communication**. They meet half termly and **reports on ideas** they have trialled are then fed into **governing body meetings**.

Having a **family engagement worker** who can **build relationships** with our parents has made a **real difference to their involvement** in the life of the school, and because she **knows them well** she can **respond to any needs quickly and sensitively**.

We have **worked with the local authority to track and contact parents** who have **not responded to their entitlement to free school meals**, and **updates** on this are provided at **governing body meetings**.

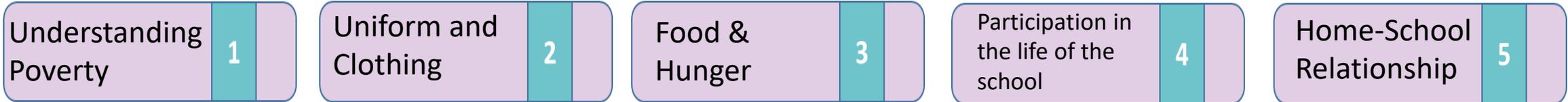


## 5 Key Areas – Creating Change

# NEXT STEPS



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- **Ensure Equity/Tackling Poverty is standard agenda item**
- **What does your school already do to support your pupils/families in these areas? Are there areas for improvement?**
- **Check if your school is already signed up to our Tackling the Impact of Poverty on Education programme and signpost how to if not**
- **Look out for the Governors Guide to be published on Hwb shortly**





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# Diolch / Thank You

## Any Questions?

For further Information Contact:

[Pupilpoverty@Childreninwales.org.uk](mailto:Pupilpoverty@Childreninwales.org.uk)



Children In Wales offer a **membership** scheme and schools can join for as little as £30 per year.

Benefits include discount off all Children in Wales high quality and diverse training courses.

Email [membership@childreninwales.org.uk](mailto:membership@childreninwales.org.uk) for further details.

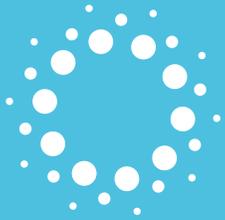


The Price of Pupil Poverty Guides and the new Governors' Guide will be on [HWB](#)

Schools may sign up to the Tackling the Impact of Poverty on Education Programme here:

<https://forms.office.com/e/znbmrnzNQY>





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## Information that could be useful for you:

\* Children in Wales membership for schools at £30 per year: [Children in Wales | Home \(childreninwalesmembership.org.uk\)](https://www.childreninwales.org.uk), and FREE membership for students and young people

\* Young volunteering scheme which could be of interest to the pupils/students at your school: [Children in Wales | Young Volunteers - Recruiting Now](https://www.childreninwales.org.uk)

\* Our full training course [programme](#)

