1 IN 5

Making Education Equal for All

Edinburgh's Pupil Equity Framework

EDINBVRGH
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

Pupil Equity Framework – Foreword

Some pupils have to order their coats from far flung places. Did you know that? These are 'special' coats which are likely to take some time to arrive, and sometimes they never do! As a former teacher, this is but one of the excuses I've heard from children across my different classrooms as they attempt to hide their poverty and more so, the related shame that others have forced them to feel.

Sadly, it's part of a wider poverty list that doesn't stop at coats and their much-needed warmth for those cold winter playtimes. Add to this the PE kit that's always in the wash, the school trip money that's been forgotten yet again, and the tired face and headache that tells a story of hunger...and never more so than after the school holidays, when the nourishment of free school meals has not been available.

'It's hard for children to be poor and we need to help because it's not their fault.'

These are the words of a P1 pupil as she worked alongside her peers from across the school stages to prepare a puppet show as part of our Community Learning Group work on 1 in 5 child poverty. At such a young age, she got it. She understood that poverty is not some kind of life choice, and that people can often be trapped in their poverty because of the structural barriers that are put before them...even at school.

There are no words to adequately communicate how passionately I feel about the move in recent times to poverty-proof our classrooms and to increasingly introduce inclusive practice.

And now, to introduce this Pupil Equity Framework! Building on the progress of the 1 in 5 project, this pioneering framework is one of the first of its kind in the UK, with the ultimate aim of laying the groundwork to ensure all young people and their families are treated with dignity and respect and feel a valuable member of their school and wider community. As well they should!

The research is clear: poverty has a detrimental effect on all aspects of development, including health, wellbeing and education, and its impact will be felt long into adulthood. So, as the song goes, 'Let's start at the very beginning, it's a very good place to start.' Invest in inclusion from an early stage and you invest in a better future for every single child...and this framework is an excellent start!

I'm particularly delighted that the framework references the different ways to make school trips, activities' week and after school activities more affordable. I'm also pleased to see school proms included. My first experience of a P7 leavers 'quali' was like a scene from the Oscars, limos and the like, and I'll remember until this day, the boy looking down at his makeshift suit in amongst the glitter! Beach parties, picnics in the park... it doesn't have to be costly for all to have fun!

2018 is the Year of Young People, and the year in which we will launch Child Friendly Edinburgh and drive forward Edinburgh Children's Partnership's new children's services plan. Schools can't do this alone though, and partnership is what it's all about...us politicians included!

In the interim, and as we launch this framework, I can't think of a better way to mark 2018 than to work together towards equity for all, and a better life and future for our children across this city. Can you?

Alison Dickie
Vice Convenor
Education, Children and Families Committee

Why should we have an Equity Framework?

In Edinburgh, child poverty affects 1 in 5 pupils or approximately 20,000 school age children and young people (after housing costs are taken into consideration). Edinburgh is a wealthy city but child poverty rates range from 25% to 35% in the least affluent areas of the city. Over 10% of children even in the most affluent parts of the city experience poverty.

The impact of poverty on children's outcomes is well documented, affecting standard of living, quality of life, health, opportunities and educational attainment. Boys born in the poorest areas of Edinburgh have a life expectancy 8.5 years shorter than those born in affluent areas. This is the widest gap in mortality rates of any Scottish city. In 2014, only 6 pupils from the least affluent areas of the city achieved 3 'A's at Higher as opposed to 280 pupils from the most affluent areas.

In 2014, Save the Children and Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People published a joint report[1] on the ways that poverty affects children and young people's experiences of education and learning in Scotland. The report includes the views of school pupils in Edinburgh and identifies the costs of going to school, the impact of poverty at home and the stigma of poverty as key reasons why the attainment of young people from low-income families tends to be below that of their more affluent peers.

Recent Scottish Government policy and investment has focused on closing the attainment gap between children from high and low income households. Every child should benefit from the highest standards of teaching and learning, and have the same opportunities to participate and succeed in all school activities. The 2017 *National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan for Scottish Education*[2] sets out the main principles which highlight the use of data and evidence to ensure excellence and equity in school practice. It aims for these principles to be embedded across school leadership and improvement plans, and to support how staff deliver learning and teaching and assess individual pupil progress. The Framework and reporting arrangements are placed on a statutory footing, making it a legal requirement for The City of Edinburgh Council to share information that will drive improvement. However, in order to achieve the principles of this National Framework, research suggests that consideration must be given to how poverty impacts on children and young people's broader experiences in school[3] and how to ensure these pupils, and their families, feel included, respected and have a sense of belonging and dignity.

 Making Education Equal For All: Edinburgh's Pupil Equity Framework further builds on the work of Communities and Families' '1 in 5: Raising Awareness of Child Poverty and the Cost of the School Day' programme and sits alongside other local guidance and policies being developed or implemented by Quality Improvement Officers in relation to teaching and learning. Implementation of this Framework in Edinburgh's schools will support them to mitigate the impact of poverty as a barrier to children's participation in the range of social and educational experiences on offer. Integrating these recommendations into everyday practice will best support all children and young people to become confident individuals, successful learners, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

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[1]Save the Children and Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People (2014) Learning Lessons: Young People's Views on Poverty and Education in Scotland.
[2]2017 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan for Scottish Education www.gov.scot/Resource/0051/000511513.pdf
[3]http://www.eis.org.uk/Child_Poverty/PovertyPack.htm

What is child poverty?

The circumstances children experience while they are growing up largely reflect the level of income and resources that are available to their parents or carers. Poverty is understood as 'not having enough' to afford the basic necessities children need for a decent standard of living. In Scotland, a child is understood to be living in poverty when they are living in a household that earns less than 60% of the average income. In 2015/16 this meant a couple-parent family with two children having approximately £400 per week, or a single parent family with two children having approximately £326 per week to cover all essential costs – from housing and utilities to food and clothing as well as travel, childcare and family activities.

Children growing up in poverty often lack basic necessities such as adequate food and a healthy diet; clean or appropriate clothing such as a winter coat and well-fitting shoes and a warm home. They are also more likely to regularly miss out on a number of items or activities deemed essential to a good standard of living in the UK such as summer holidays, access to the internet at home, birthday parties or eating out as a family. The majority of children experiencing poverty have at least one parent in paid work; however, children whose parents are not in work are at a high risk of experiencing poverty. Children who grow up in larger families, in a single parent family or who have a disabled parent are also more likely than other children to experience poverty, although it is not always the case.

What do we want to achieve?

This Framework aims to support the implementation of Edinburgh Children's Partnership Services Plan priorities[4], particularly in relation to strategic outcomes 2 and 4. Namely *SO2: Children and young people's attendance, engagement and achievement will be improved and the poverty related attainment gap will be reduced and; SO4: Equity amongst children and young people and their families will be advanced*. The costs associated with school, and the effect of negative attitudes towards poverty, are significant for low-income families. When families struggle or are unable to meet costs, the experiences of children and young people in school are undermined as a consequence of stigma and being unable to participate in all of the social and learning experiences that schools offer. Evidence suggests that this can lead to children and young people disengaging from school and effectively excluding themselves from learning. In order to close the attainment gap it is essential that, alongside quality teaching, curricular content and assessment of pupil progress, due consideration is given to pupils' broad experience and enjoyment of school and education. Closing the attainment gap will be more achievable if children and young people feel respected, valued, included and have a sense of belonging in school. Only then will they effectively engage with school and learning. In short, this framework aims to 'lay the groundwork' in educational establishments to creating a sense of dignity and belonging for pupils and families experiencing poverty.

Our vision
* **Achieve equity:** ensure that every child has the opportunity to participate equally in school experiences and that no child is excluded from these as a result of inability to meet school costs;
* **Promote respect and dignity for pupils and their families affected by poverty:** ensure that school communities are informed about the realities of living in poverty, have policies in place which prevent income-based bullying and allow children/families to speak confidentially about financial difficulties.

Who is this document for?

This Equity Framework is one of the first of its kind in the UK and as such it is ambitious and pioneering. Taking forward new approaches, whilst enhancing existing ones, which aim to break down the subtle barriers to equity in education and ensure the best possible outcomes for every child will involve all those who work with, and care for, children and their families. Implementing the recommendations in the *Making Education Equal For All: Edinburgh's Pupil Equity Framework* will involve commitment from elected members, school leaders, staff, pupils and parents as well as ensuring effective partnerships with relevant organisations in the wider community.
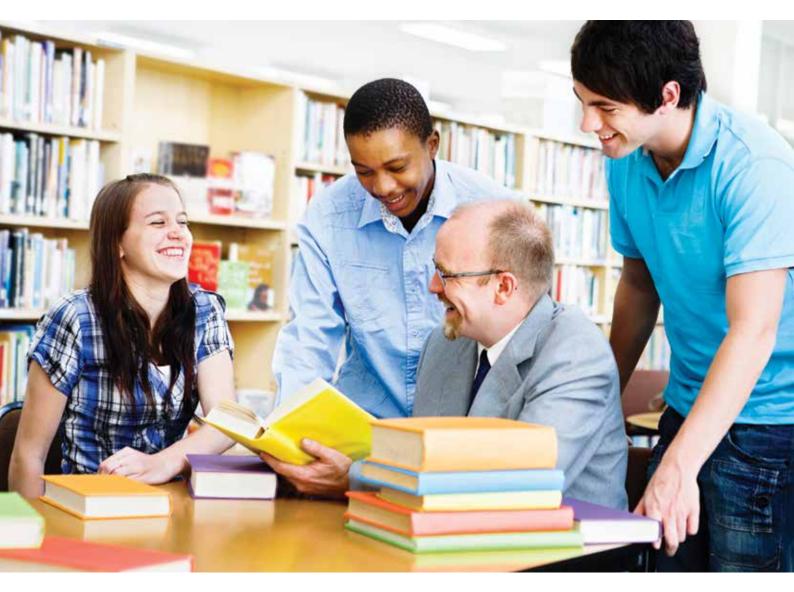
[4]The Edinburgh Children's Partnership Children's Services Plan 2017 to 2020
file:///H:/Edinburgh_Childrens_Services_Plan___2017_2020_Final%20(1).pdf

Priorities

This document builds on the work of the Communities and Families '1 in 5: Raising Awareness of Child Poverty' project which was approved by the Children and Families Committee in a report in May 2016[5]. This Framework seeks to support schools make any changes necessary that will enable pupils to take full advantage of the education provided. The Framework also takes into account the recommendations from young people set out in the Learning Lessons[6] research and draws on the recommendations of The Cost of the School Day[7].

Schools currently involved in '1 in 5' continue to contribute to the recommendations laid out below. The additional funding being made available to schools through the Pupil Equity Fund can be utilised to help schools implement some of these changes. The key areas this Equity Framework will address are to:

✴ **Minimise costs and reduce pressure on family budgets:** This will include guidance on reducing the cost of attending school, ensuring all children have access to resources for learning in the classroom and supporting families to access financial support and maximise their income.

✴ **Ensure equal access to opportunities, regardless of income:** This will include consideration of access to extra-curricular activities, social and charity events in the school and support for learning at home

✴ **Reduce poverty-related stigma:** This will include awareness-raising activity amongst staff, parents and children and young people by utilising relevant training materials and classroom resources.

[5]CEC 2016 '1 in 5: Raising Awareness of Child Poverty: Recommendations for Schools and supporting Committee report
[6]Save the Children and Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People (2014) Learning Lessons: Young People's Views on Poverty and Education in Scotland.
[7]CPAG (2016) The Cost of the School Day www.cpag.org.uk/sites/default/files/CPAG-Scot-Cost-Of-School-Day-Report (Oct15)-1.pdf

Minimise costs and reduce pressure on family budgets

All children and young people should be able to meet the costs of school and have the resources they need to support their learning.

Families experiencing poverty often lack the money to pay for essential items such as school equipment and uniforms, school trips or extra materials to use in certain subjects. This can be a particular challenge for families with more than one child. It can also be more difficult at certain points in the year, such as festive periods or immediately after school holidays, when pressures on family budgets are especially high.

Schools already adopt a range of measures to minimise costs and reduce pressure on family budgets. In addition 'Top Tips' for reducing school costs, developed from ideas and recommendations made as part of '1 in 5', have been distributed to all schools with an expectation that they should adopt some or all of the recommendations it contains, as well as develop their own approaches to minimise costs.

Current statistics also show that a significant number of free school meals and clothing grants are not claimed from The City of Edinburgh Council by eligible families every year. The following are measures which are recommended to support a consistent approach to minimising main costs associated with school.

Resources for learning

According to the Education (Scotland) Act 2010 (Section 11) an education authority should be providing free of charge books, writing materials, stationery, mathematical instruments, practice materials and all other articles which are necessary to enable the pupils to take full advantage of the education provided.

The education authority may also provide articles of clothing suitable for physical exercise or other school activities requiring special items of clothes (eg school camp).

Schools however, due to budget pressures, may ask for discretionary payments for certain subjects such as Food Technology, CDT and art. However set out in the aforementioned act this cannot be made mandatory.

Schools should:
* Provide stationery and equipment free of charge for pupils to use. Where this is not provided universally, schools should make this easy for pupils to access discreetly.
* Provide pupils with free materials which relate to learning at school and the delivery of lessons. Any contributions to the cost of materials should be voluntary and at the discretion of parents.
* Consult children on their access to IT outside of school and support with learning at home. Adapt homework policies and activities where necessary to ensure that children have the equipment and support they need to complete it effectively.
* Provide options for completing homework within school and ensure access to computers/internet/ materials to complete as required.
* Refrain from asking pupils to use their own mobile phones to support learning in the classroom unless all pupils have access to equipment. If pupils use their own mobile phones, staff should provide the school wifi password and remind pupils not to use their own mobile data.

Uniform

Schools should:
* Ensure that all parents are aware of School Uniform Grants – provide clear and accessible information to parents in the school about the support on offer and how they can apply.
* Offer support to parents to make applications for financial support. Be aware of perceived stigma or challenges in understanding and completing written application processes.
* Adopt a flexible uniform policy to ensure that parents are able to purchase uniforms from a range of suppliers.

✳ Only sell uniform items to families on a non-profit making basis.
✳ Presume that children who lack mandatory school uniform items require financial support or assistance. Speak sensitively to the child and/or family as appropriate to establish whether support is required and how best to ensure that families are able to meet the costs.
✳ Provide temporary permissions for non-uniform items and a realistic timescale for families to purchase appropriate items should they not be able to afford school uniform.
✳ Discreetly offer spare clothing for pupil use where this is available (see 'Top Tips' for suggestions).
✳ Be discreet when raising uniform-related issues with pupils including not drawing attention to a pupil's dress in public.

School Trips

Schools should:
✳ Have a transparent policy for planning, funding and delivering school trips.
✳ Ensure that during the planning of trips, costs are kept to a minimum.
✳ Provide financial support or reduced fees for children living in low income households, including additional reductions for siblings.
✳ Conduct an annual audit of potential or planned trips for the school year, and clarify the aims and purpose as well as the estimated costs for each. This information should be used to:
  • Review and develop a clear rationale and justification of costs for all trips.
  • Make modifications to school trips so that they are accessible to children from low-income households and are cost efficient.
  • Inform and consult parents at the start of the school year about plans for school trips to get their advice on how to: make them more affordable/accessible; identify parents who require financial support or reduced costs; and ensure that parents have time to plan finances accordingly (see also **communication with parents**).
  • Set out the steps that will be taken to ensure that all children can afford to go on trips and any alternative measures that will be in place to ensure the trip is equitable and accessible.

✳ Allow parents the opportunity to pay for trips and other costs in affordable instalments. This must be given a long lead in time where required. Trips should not be offered on a 'first come first served' basis as this will favour pupils from families who are able to pay in advance.
✳ Where trips require special clothing and equipment, eg school camps, this should be made available at no charge by the activity provider. If this is not possible, it should be made available to borrow or purchase at low cost from the school through exchanges and flash sales.
✳ In addition, the local authority should investigate the potential to set up a central fund to provide financial support to children from low-income families and facilitate their inclusion in more expensive but hugely beneficial activities, such as residential stays at outdoor centres.

Financial support to meet costs

Implementation of the following reommendations can be supported by referring to the 1in5 booklet *Financial Support and Information for Families*.

Schools should:
✳ Routinely inform families about FSM, clothing grants. They should also signpost families to other organisations who may support them to maximise income and make routine enquiries about family finances (See the 1 in 5 booklet *Financial Support and Information for Families*)
✳ Consider providing a proportion of funding (for example Pupil Equity Funding) to support families to meet the costs of school trips, clothing and equipment or other costs identified by families during periods of financial pressure or crisis.
✳ Consider other ways of using Pupil Equity Funding to provide financial advice and support to families through the school. For example developing partnerships with welfare advice organisations to have a welfare advisor located in schools across a cluster.
✳ Consult with children and their families on a regular basis to identify any further 'money worries' or similar support that could be useful.

Ensure equal access to opportunities, regardless of income

All children should be able to benefit from, and meet the costs of, a wide range of learning opportunities in the home, school and community.

Children experiencing poverty often miss out on regular activities outside of school, such as taking part in sports teams, joining clubs or going to the cinema and theatre. This is often because of the costs associated with these activities – both direct, such as the cost of membership or attendance, and indirect, such as transport, specialist clothing or equipment. They are therefore less likely to enjoy the rich learning experiences outside of the school day that are available to their more affluent peers. Families raising children on low incomes may also find it more difficult to provide effective support for their children's learning at home. This can be due to the extra stress and pressure that poverty creates within families or because it is harder to provide the quiet space, time and resources children need to learn.

We know that children achieve more and are happier when schools work together with parents and families and share ideas about how to support and extend children's learning within the classroom and at home. Parental engagement has been a priority in schools for many years now as it is recognised that it is central to raising attainment and closing the attainment gap. Parental support and engagement is also a main driver of the National Improvement Framework. *Supporting Parents and Carers in Edinburgh* provides guidance and recommendations for implementing parent and carer support for practitioners. Research shows that the vast majority of parents and families are interested in supporting their children's and their own learning[8]. However, many can find it difficult to engage with schools. Reasons for this are varied and may include differing social capital as a result of socio-economic background and other, often related, issues such as mental health, homelessness or emotional trauma.

The following, therefore, are measures recommended to support a consistent approach to ensuring that all children have equal access to wider learning opportunities and support.

Extra-curricular Activities

Schools should:
* Provide free, or low cost (and funded places when necessary), after school activities in the school.
* Use 'off timetable' activity weeks to deliver a broad of range of free, low-cost and school-based activities.
* Ensure that costs of special clothing, equipment, transport and other costs are not a barrier to children and young people's ability to participate in extra-curricular activities.
* Work with local partners to provide free and affordable access to extra-curricular activities within the school and local community.
* Consult pupils to identify any financial or related barriers (for example, home pressures, stigma, low confidence) that prevent them from taking part in extra-curricular activities which are on offer. This consultation should also identify activities pupils would like to be able to participate in.

Social and Charity Events

Schools should:
* Not require a donation or payment from parents as a pre-requisite for children to be able to participate in activities or fundraisers.
* Not exclude pupils who have not paid for activities in school such as visiting pantomimes, author events, etc. Always assume this is due to families struggling with costs and discuss with families how the school can support them in meeting costs.
* Encourage and collect donations for activities and fundraisers discretely through optional contributions.

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[8]Treanor, M (2017) 'Can we put the 'poverty of aspiration' myth to bed now?', Centre for Research on Families and Relationships, Research Briefing 91

* Space events out over the year, avoiding expensive times like holiday periods and the start of the school year.
* Consult with children and parents on ideas for activities that can reduce costs.
* Adopt proven ideas that celebrate the efforts of children and young people to raise money or awareness of charity causes rather than amounts raised.

Leavers Events

Schools should:
* Not charge pupils for attendance at school leaver events or celebrations. Any contributions should be at the discretion of young people and their parents.
* Discourage pupils from buying luxury items.
* Hold 'picnics in the park' or 'trips to the beach' rather than a Prom for primary age children.
* Hold Proms in the school or a local hall rather than at expensive hotels.
* Offer a dress/suit exchange or 'vintage' dress stall for secondary Proms
* Be explicit about the hiring of, for example, limousines not being approved or welcomed by the school.

Engagement with Parents

Schools should:
* Prioritise building strong relationships with parents to support children's learning at home.
* Offer opportunities for parents to observe how learning and teaching takes place in the classroom and provide suggestions on ways they could help their child to extend this outside of school.
* Hold regular social events and opportunities for parents to spend time within the school, such as coffee mornings, evening suppers and pizza nights – these should focus on informal chat and conversation to build friendly relationships between parents and staff.
* Provide a dedicated room or space within the school where parents are invited to spend time with one another and plan activities for parental engagement in their children's learning.
* Provide clear and simple instructions alongside homework and other activities to support learning at home and enable parents to understand how they can help their children to complete tasks.
* Create opportunities for parents to share views with the school on challenges to engaging their child's learning at home; meeting school costs and understanding who to speak to for information and advice – consider methods where feedback can be provided anonymously.
* Work with the parent council to ensure that a proportion of their annual fundraising (ideally 25%) is given to support the Equity Framework.
* Work with community partners to identify the best ways of engaging with parents, especially those who are hardly reached and seldom heard.
* Use the Pupil Equity Fund to deliver evidence-based outreach activities.

Reduce poverty-related stigma

All children should feel respected, included and supported by staff and pupils in their school and local community.

Children and young people who experience poverty often report feelings of isolation and exclusion at school and may be more likely to experience bullying. Negative attitudes and perceptions of poverty can also lead to stigma which makes it harder for children, young people and their families to approach school staff for support. These experiences can have a negative impact on children's attendance and achievement as well as on parental engagement. Parents may feel embarrassed or anxious about approaching schools for support. They may also feel stigmatised as a result of being eligible for financial support.

In order to close the attainment gap, it is essential that alongside quality teaching, curricular content and assessment of pupil progress, due consideration is given to pupils' holistic experience of school and education and that steps are taken to tackle the impact of poverty-related stigma.

The following are measures recommended to support a consistent approach to raising awareness of the realities and impact of poverty. At the same time, they should ensure that all children and families feel respected and supported.

Poverty Awareness

Schools should:
* Promote informed understanding about child poverty and have a zero-tolerance approach to negative stereotyping of children and parents in low-income households.
* Ensure that all staff receive training to understand the impact of poverty on children and families in Edinburgh, for example through participating in the '1 in 5 Raising Awareness of Child Poverty' workshop.
* Refer to resources such as the EIS school poverty proofing guidelines[9], Seen and Heard[10] and the Learning Lessons research[11] as well as Edinburgh's own child poverty 1 in 5 training materials and resources to raise awareness of the financial barriers to education and the role that teachers can play in reducing the impact on children.
* Introduce pupils to the issues surrounding child poverty in Scotland through learning activities in the school – this should include linking pupil education on poverty with the Rights Respecting Schools initiative.

Improvement Activity

Schools should:
* Work with children and parents to improve the school experience of children living in poverty, including asking for children's and families' advice when developing school improvement plans and activities.
* Ensure that staff meetings, development and in-service days and other mechanisms to support school staff are used to share information, advice and best practice in how to tackle to impact of poverty on children's experiences and learning.
* Ensure that mechanisms are in place to identify and address poverty-related bullying within the school community.
* Prioritise activities in the school that can build relationships with families experiencing poverty, in order to develop trust and mutual understanding.

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[9]EIS (2016) 'Face up to Child Poverty: Poverty Proofing Your School' http://www.eis.org.uk/Child_Poverty/PovertyPack.htm
[10]UNICEF 'Seen and Heard: Helping young people explore poverty and childrens rights in the UK. A Secondary School teaching pack, https://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/resources/teaching-resources/seen-and-heard-secondary-school-resource/
[11]Elsley S (2014) 'Learning Lessons: Young people's views on poverty and education in Scotland' https://www.cypcs.org.uk/ufiles/Learning-Lessons.pdf

✳ Be conscious about the impact that questions relating to what parents do for a living or where children have been on holiday can have on children experiencing poverty.

✳ Retain free breakfast club places for children from low-income families where appropriate.

✳ Where feasible, provide facilities for washing clothes.

✳ Make hygiene and sanitary products freely available for pupils to access discreetly.