



# The Federation of Mowden Schools (Academy Trust)

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## Poverty Proofing – School's Actions

Dear Parents

You might remember that earlier in the year we had Georgina from the charity 'Children North East' in school to carry out a 'poverty proofing audit' for us. She spent a week interviewing staff, children and parents. The purpose was to find ways in which we can reduce financial burdens to all parents and in doing so reduce some inequalities too. Her findings then produced quite a lengthy report and an action plan.

The governors agreed on the action plan and I thought you might find it interesting to learn about the key points.

**Charity Fundraising.** School has many requests, both locally and nationally for fundraising. We have agreed to a maximum of six of these per year, or one per half term. This includes any non-uniform days. It's also good practice to direct parents to online giving rather than assuming everyone can bring in a donation. All classes now have a donation box per class too for such days, rather than open giving.

**School visits.** We have agreed to give at least a month's notice for any visit costing £10 or more (and two months for £20 etc). Our Year 6 visit to Kingswood was one of the best examples of forward planning and payments seen by Georgina. Our kitchen now also offers packed lunches to any child who wishes it for their visit, whether they normally have a free or a paid-for meal. This change has already been very popular. We also won't be asking children to bring spending money on visits.

**PE Kits.** We now have a bank of spare PE kit for each year group, in case of 'forgetfulness'. This replaces the need for children to borrow it from others. If parents have any spare trainers, as children outgrow them, ongoing donations would be very welcome. On Sports Days children will also wear plain white PE tops from now on with school providing coloured bibs. Similarly we ask that parents stick to the PE kit rule on Mowden Mile days too; no matching track suits please, football shirts or other items of non-school kit.

**Junior School Homework.** If an online piece is set, we will also provide a paper copy. Many children seem to prefer this anyway.

**Toys, Key Rings, Pencil Cases etc.** We ask that parents don't allow their child to bring in personal items from home. Toys go missing or get broken, the key rings attached to book bags in the infants are becoming too cumbersome, and we provide all writing and classroom equipment so no pencil cases please. Please don't be offended therefore if the teacher takes these off your child.

There are a couple of exceptions to this, that staff agreed we should keep. One is anything a child brings in which is relevant to their class topic e.g. a historic artefact. The other is trading cards such as Pokemon or football cards. We agreed on the latter because although they are an expense to parents, they do provide a constructive playtime alternative for some children. If the cards begin to be a nuisance (arguments, cards going missing etc) we will stop them, but on the whole our children do play with these responsibly.

**Year 5/6 Disco tuck shop.** Last year the older children were allowed to bring in their own money for tuck (instead of the ticket price including a certain sweet shop allowance). Some brought in £10 or more and spent it all on junk. With agreement from the Friends, at future discos the older children will pay up front and get an allowance, as per the younger ones.

**Water Bottles.** We don't mind if parents supply their child with a water bottle, but please keep these plain. If they become a bit blingy or patterned, the teacher will ask your child to bring a different one.

**Gift Giving.** We don't want to encourage a culture of gift giving, although I do understand the sentiments behind it. We just don't want parents to feel obliged to do it. Please don't buy collective gifts for teachers and please don't feel that you have to provide gifts for other children, for example on your child's birthday. With the latter there are also legitimate allergy concerns for some, so if you do provide something such as cake, please ensure that it is a bought item and clearly states allergy free.

**Sports Clubs – for 2019.** Children attending some of our after school sports clubs (football mostly) all seem to wear a football shirt from their favourite team. These are not cheap and this isn't a rule of the club; we don't want some children to be put off joining because they don't have one. From next September, we will introduce a plain white shirt rule for after school too.

**Providing financial assistance.** This has always been implicit in what we do, but we'd like to make it more explicit from now on. Please contact the school office if you ever require financial assistance for anything school related. Staff will be very discreet.

Yours faithfully,



Peter King  
Headteacher.