



**ADDYSG CYMRU  
EDUCATION WALES**  
cenhadaeth ein cenedl | our national mission



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

# Toolkit for Schools

Communications with parents about financial help with School Essentials, including Free School Meals.

# Our Approach



# Our approach

## Who/What?

This is a toolkit to help primary schools explain to parents and carers about the help with school costs that might be available to them - including the School Essentials Grant and the rollout of Universal Primary Free School Meals (UPFSM).

## Why?

**Across Wales, many parents are not claiming the help with school costs they are entitled to. In recognition of the rising cost of living, we are urging parents and carers to claim the support, to help pay for School Essentials.**

Based on our findings from focus groups across Wales, we have found that parents expect to hear directly from their schools and Local Authorities about changes to their child's education.

## Why now?

Parents and carers need to know what's changing and what that will mean for their child.

September 2022 saw the rollout of Universal Primary Free School Meals across Wales, starting with learners in Reception. The policy is part of the Co-operation Agreement between the Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru, which will see Free School Meals extended to all primary school learners by September 2024.

## How?

Together, we can ensure that parents and carers have the right information about what support is on offer, as well as how and where to apply. In this toolkit, you'll find everything you need to share information with parents and carers of learners at your school.

# Playing your part

## **You can help us raise awareness among parents and carers at your school or setting.**

We have created a bank of ready-made assets that you can use on your school's or setting's communication channels, be that social media, school apps, emails, posters around the building, or banners on the school gates.

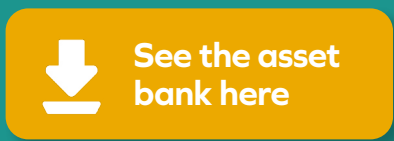
## **What you can do:**

- Share posts on your social media channels
- Print out posters and display them around areas parents and carers visit
- Write about the School Essentials and the rollout of Universal Primary Free School Meals (UPFSM) in your newsletter, or use the templates provided
- Send messages to parents and carers via email, WhatsApp or any other communication channels used, e.g. leaflets home in bags
- Host a 'What you need to know about financial support for School Essentials' session with parents and carers



# Asset bank / resources

Here's everything you'll need to get started. Access the asset bank below to download assets and templates.



\*Your local authority may be able to help with print costs via their administration fee for UPFSM.

# Accounts to follow

Twitter

[@LIC\\_Addysg](#) / [@WG\\_Education](#)  
[@dechraucartref](#) / [@edubeginsathome](#)  
[@HwbAddysg\\_Cymru](#)

Facebook

[addysgcymru](#) / [educationwales](#)  
[dechraucartref](#) / [beginsathome](#)

YouTube

[Addysg Cymru](#) / [Education Wales](#)

Websites

[gov.wales/education-changing](#)  
[hwb.gov.wales](#)

Hashtags to Use

[#BwydoEuBywydau](#) / [#FeedTheirFuture](#)



# Messaging



# Key phrases for parents and carers

Here are the key phrases that must be considered throughout our writing.

## UPFSM: Universal Primary Free School Meals

Schools are rolling out Universal Primary Free School Meals. The aim is for all primary school children to receive a free lunch in schools by September 2024. For more specific dates, parents should check with their school or Local Authority on their plans for rollout.

## eFSM: Eligible For Free School Meals

You might see the phrase eFSM alongside information about UPFSM. **You need to check your eligibility to receive Free School Meals regardless of the rollout of UPFSM — if eligible, you and your school could also receive extra funding.**

## School Essentials Grant

There could be additional support available to those currently in receipt of, or eligible for, Free School Meals. School Essentials can help pay for things like school uniform, footwear, stationery, sports kit and other equipment.

From July 2023, the allowance is £125 per learner and up to £200 for those going into Year 7 to recognise the additional costs of starting secondary school.



# Key messages for parents and carers

**Here are some key messages that will help parents and carers understand more about the School Essentials Grant, and the rollout of Universal Primary Free School Meals (UPFSM).**

- In Wales, many parents are not claiming the financial support they are entitled to for help with School Essentials.
- If your child is currently in receipt of Free School Meals, you may also be entitled to additional help for School Essentials.
- School Essentials helps with costs such as uniform, footwear, sports kit, stationery, and other equipment.
- The Universal Primary policy is part of the Co-operation Agreement between the Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru, which will see Free School Meals extended to all primary school learners over the course of the agreement.
- Universal Primary Free School Meals (UPFSM) will be offered to all primary school children by September 2024 — check with your Local Authority or school on their plans for rollout.
- If you are in receipt of certain benefits, and are taking up UPFSM, check your eligibility for Free School Meals and apply separately via your Local Authority. Checking eligibility for Free School Meals can give access to the School Essentials Grant and additional funding for your school.
- If your child is in a year group that is not yet being offered UPFSM, they may still be eligible for FSM and extra support via the School Essentials Grant. It is imperative that you apply as the school will benefit too. For every learner that qualifies for FSM, the school will receive additional funding to provide targeted support, buy equipment and provide extra resources.



# Social media posts: general messaging

## The aim:

Inform parents and carers that support is available to them through Free School Meals.

Here are some ready-made posts you can use on your social media channels.

## Facebook / Instagram / Twitter

Don't miss out on Free School Meals for your child. Check eligibility and find out about the support you may be entitled to: [\[LA LINK\]](#)

Have you claimed what's yours? Your child may be entitled to Free School Meals and help with School Essentials. Check eligibility: [\[LA LINK\]](#)

If your child is eligible for Free School Meals, you could also be entitled to up to £200 of extra funding for School Essentials. It could also mean additional funding for your school.

School costs can add up but support is available for School Essentials and Free School Meals. Check eligibility here: [\[LA LINK\]](#) **#FeedTheirFuture**

By September 2024, all children in primary school can enjoy Free School Meals. You can also get help with other school costs. Find out more: [\[LA LINK\]](#)

# Social media posts: specific to your school or setting

## The aim:

Raise parents' awareness about the support available through the School Essentials Grant.

Details can vary, so here are some examples to get you started. Please customise messages to tailor to your school or setting.

## Facebook / Instagram / Twitter

Have you claimed what's yours? If your child is entitled to Free School Meals, there might be more help available via the School Essentials Grant. Check eligibility: [\[LA LINK\]](#)

School costs can all add up. That's why the Welsh Government is offering support with School Essentials to help with the cost of uniform, kit, stationery and more. Check eligibility: [\[LA LINK\]](#)

Even if your child already receives a Free School Meal, you still need to check eligibility to access the School Essentials Grant and extra funding for your school.

**[INSERT SCHOOL]** is urging all parents and carers to claim the help with school costs they are entitled to – up to £200 if you are eligible. It could also mean extra funding for your school. Learn more: [\[LA LINK\]](#)

**[INSERT SCHOOL]** offers Free School Meals to all children up to **[INSERT YEAR]**. [\[LA LINK\]](#)

# Social media posts: specific to your school or setting

## The aim:

Utilise more direct channels such as WhatsApp or apps unique to your school or setting.

Here are some messages that you can share.

## WhatsApp / School Apps

The School Essentials Grant can help pay for things like schools uniform, school shoes, sports kit, stationery and other equipment. If your child is eligible for Free School Meals, you might be entitled to extra funding via the School Essentials Grant. Check eligibility: [\[LA LINK\]](#)

We have been busy preparing our kitchens for the rollout of Universal Primary Free School Meals (UPFSM). Every child in [\[INSERT YEARS\]](#) at [\[INSERT SCHOOL\]](#) is being offered Free School Meals. Find out more here: [\[LA LINK\]](#)

School meals promote healthy eating, increase the variety of food your child might eat, and can improve behaviour and social skills. Universal Primary Free School Meals (UPFSM) will be offered to all children by September 2024. [\[LA LINK\]](#)

Do you have any questions about the rollout of Free School Meals or the School Essentials Grant? Please get in touch with [\[PERSON and CONTACT\]](#) You can find out more at [\[INSERT LA PAGE\]](#)



Assisting visual  
assets can be  
found here



# Newsletter / email template

## Consider the following topics to cover in email updates to parents and carers.

'How can parents/carers at your school claim UPFSM, and other support with School Essentials costs?'

'Why is it important for children to have a meal at school? E.g. benefits for learning, well-being and behaviour.'

'How will the rollout of UPFSM continue at your school over the next few years?'

'How has support with school essentials and meals helped learners and parents/carers at your school?'

Dear Parent/Carer,

In Wales, many parents are not claiming the Free School Meals that their children are entitled to. We are writing to remind you to check eligibility and of the additional support that might be available to you.

School meals promote healthy eating, increase the variety of food your child might eat, and can improve behaviour and social skills. If you receive certain benefits, or your circumstances have changed, check if your child is eligible for Free School Meals and the School Essentials Grant through **[INSERT LOCAL AUTHORITY URL]**. The form is short and only takes a few minutes to complete.

If your child already gets Free School Meals, there could be up to £200 available for School Essentials. This helps with the costs of School Essentials like uniforms and equipment to make sure they are ready for the school day.

Schools have started to rollout Universal Primary Free School Meals. By September 2024, all children in primary school can enjoy Free School Meals. Find out more here **[INSERT LOCAL AUTHORITY URL]**.

Please note, if you are eligible for certain benefits, parents will still need to apply separately for the School Essentials Grant to access the additional support. This could mean extra funding for your school too.

Kind regards

# Checklist

- Follow our social media channels
- Share key messages on social media and parent channels
- Create and share content using the #FeedTheirFuture hashtag
- Download and share print materials
- Talk to parents and carers about what they need to know





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**Thank  
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