

FEED THEIR  
FUTURE



**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

Who/what, why, why now and how?



# Our approach

## Who/What?

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

## Why?

Across Wales, up to 40% of 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 they might be entitled to, 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.

In September 2022, the rollout of Universal Primary Free School Meals across Wales will begin, 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 over the next two years.

## 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:

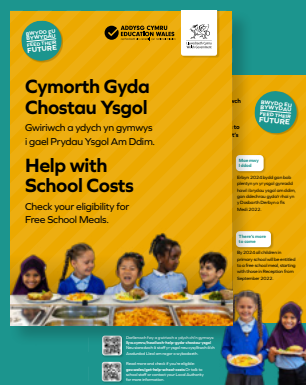
- Share posts on your social media channels
- Print out posters and display them around areas parents and carers visit
- Write about the School Essentials (PDG Access) and the rollout of Universal Primary Free School Meals (UPFSM) in your newsletter, or use the templates provided
- Send messages to parents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

# From us to you

Here's everything you'll need to get started. Use the links below to download assets and templates.



See the asset bank here



# Accounts to follow

Twitter

@LIC\_Addysg / @WG\_Education  
@dechraucartref / @edubeginsathome  
@HwbAddysgCymru / @HwbNews

Facebook

addysgcymru / educationwales  
dechraucartref / beginsathome

YouTube

Addysg Cymru / Education Wales

Websites

gov.wales/education-changing  
hwb.gov.wales

Hashtags to Use

#BwydoEuBywydau / #FeedTheirFuture

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

# Messaging

Key phrases and messages



# Key phrases for parents and carers

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

## UPFSM: Universal Primary Free School Meals

The rollout of Universal Primary Free School Meals will begin with Reception in September 2022, and extend to Years 1 and 2 no later than the start of the Summer term, April 2023. The aim is for all primary school children to receive a free lunch in schools within two years.

## eFSM: Existing Free School Meals

You might see the phrase eFSM alongside information about UPFSM. You need to apply for eligibility to receive free school meals regardless of the rollout of UPFSM – if eligible, you and your school will receive extra funding.

## School Essentials (PDG Access)

The above refers to the support that might be available to those currently in receipt of, or eligible for, Free School Meals. School Essentials (PDG Access) can help pay for things like school uniform, footwear, stationery, sports kit and other equipment.

The allowance has been raised by £100 for this year only to £225 per learner, or £300 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 (PDG Access), and the rollout of Universal Primary Free School Meals (UPFSM).**

- In Wales, up to 40% of eligible 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 (PDG Access).
- School Essentials (PDG Access) helps with school essentials such as uniform, footwear, sports kit, stationery, and other equipment.
- The Universal Free School Meals 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 next two years.
- From September 2022, every primary school in Wales will offer Free School Meals for all children in Reception.
- If your child is starting reception class in September, they will be offered the new, Universal Primary Free School Meals (UPFSM). However, if you are in receipt of a certain income, parents will still need to apply separately to the local authority for School Essentials (PDG Access) to access all of the funding available.
- If your child is older than Reception class, they may be eligible to receive Free School Meals and funding for school essentials. It is very important to your child's school that you apply. The school can access additional funding for children who qualify for Free School Meals (eFSM) that will allow them to provide targeted support programmes, buy equipment and provide extra resources.



# Messaging

Sharing online



# Social media posts: Free School Meals (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. 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 (PDG Access). Learn more: **[LA LINK]**

Have a child in Reception? From September, they can get a lunch at school for free. Register here: **[SCHOOL/LA LINK]**

Back to school. September can be an expensive time. Check if you're eligible for help with school essentials, including Free School Meals. **[LA LINK] #FeedTheirFuture**

The new school year brings new support for our learners. All children in Reception will be entitled to a free school meal. Claim yours here: **[LA LINK]**

# Social media posts: specific to your school or setting

## The aim:

Raise parents' awareness about the support available through the School Essentials (PDG Access).

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 (PDG Access). Learn more: [\[LA LINK\]](#)

It can all add up when your child is starting school. To check if you're eligible for help with the cost of uniform, sports kit, devices and more, visit [\[LA LINK\]](#)

If you're eligible for Free School Meals, [\[INSERT SCHOOL\]](#) may be eligible for extra funding and resources. Learn more: [\[LA LINK\]](#)

Up to 40% of parents in Wales are not claiming the help with school costs they are entitled to – up to £225 if you are eligible. [\[INSERT SCHOOL\]](#) is urging all our parents and carers to claim what's theirs. Learn more: [\[LA LINK\]](#)

[\[INSERT SCHOOL\]](#) will offer Free School Meals for all children starting Reception in September 2022: [\[LA LINK\]](#)

# 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.



Assisting visual  
assets can be  
found here

## WhatsApp / School Apps

Do you know about the School Essentials (PDG Access)? It can help pay for things like school uniform, school shoes, sports kit, stationery and other equipment. If you're eligible for Free School Meals, you might be entitled to this funding. You can check here [\[LA LINK\]](#)

We have been busy preparing our kitchens for the rollout of Universal Primary Free School Meals (UPFSM). From September, every child in Reception at [\[INSERT SCHOOL\]](#) will be offered Free School Meals. You can find out more here: [\[LA LINK\]](#)

Did you know that every child starting Reception at [\[INSERT SCHOOL\]](#) will be offered Free School Meals? School meals promote healthy eating, increase the variety of food your child might eat, and can improve behaviour and social skills. Learn about the rollout of Universal Primary Free School Meals (UPFSM) here: [\[LA LINK\]](#)

Do you have any questions about the rollout of Free School Meals for Primary School Children in [\[SCHOOL\]](#)? Please don't hesitate to get in touch with [\[PERSON and CONTACT\]](#) You can also find plenty of info at [\[INSERT LA PAGE\]](#)

We know that it can all add up as you prepare for your child to go back to school in September. Have you checked if you are eligible for the School Essentials (PDG Access)? You can get up to £225 per learner if you are eligible. Find out more here: [\[LA LINK\]](#)



# 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,

As the cost of living rises, no child should go without. In Wales, nearly half of parents are not claiming the free school meals that their children are entitled to. We are writing to remind you of the three types of support you might be entitled to.

Don't miss out on Free School Meals. 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 you're entitled through **[INSERT LOCAL AUTHORITY URL]**.

If your child already gets free school meals, there could be more help available through School Essentials (PDG Access). This helps with the costs of school essentials like uniforms and equipment to make sure they are ready for the school day.

Last term, we got in touch to tell you about the rollout of Universal Primary Free School Meals. This will begin in September 2022, starting with children in Reception. Find out more here **[INSERT LOCAL AUTHORITY URL]**.

Please note, if you are in receipt of a certain income, parents will still need to apply separately for School Essentials (PDG Access) to access all of the funding available.

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 for September 2022 and beyond



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**Diolch.**  
**Thank you.**

