



**ADDYSG CYMRU
EDUCATION WALES**
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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Toolkit for Secondary Schools

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

**FEED THEIR
FUTURE**



The Campaign

Our approach

Who/What?

This is a toolkit to help secondary schools explain to parents and carers about the help with school costs that might be available to them — including the School Essentials Grant (formerly PDG Access) and Free School Meals.

Why?

In recognition of the rising cost of living, we are urging parents and carers to check their eligibility for help with school costs, and to claim what's theirs.

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.

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, or posters around the building.

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 School Essentials and Free School Meals in your newsletter, or use the templates provided
- Send messages to parents and carers via email, WhatsApp or any other communication channels 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.



Click here for
the asset bank



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:

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

Free School Meals

In secondary school, you need to apply for Free School Meals with your local authority – if eligible, you and your school will receive extra funding.

Note: Universal Free School Meals for Primary Schools is a separate initiative being rolled out in primary schools only. Starting September 2022 with Reception-age children and moving through to all children up to Year 6 by September 2024.

School Essentials Grant

This refers to the support that might be available to those currently in receipt of, or eligible for, Free School Meals. The School Essentials Grant 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:

Here are some key messages to help parents and carers claim the help they are entitled to.

- If you receive certain benefit payments, you may be eligible for Free School Meals and help with other School Essentials.
- It takes minutes to complete the form to check whether you're eligible.
- If your child is eligible for Free School Meals, you may also be entitled to up to £200 worth of additional help for School Essentials. We urge you to check with your local authority for the full support that may be available to you.
- The School Essentials Grant helps cover the costs of uniform, footwear, sports kit, stationery, and other equipment.
- It is also 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.
- Learners that receive a Free School Meal are given a cashless card to use in the canteen like everyone – there should be no stigma involved in getting a Free School Meal.
- You need to apply to the local authority that your child's school is in not the local authority that you live in (if different).



Sharing Online

Social media posts: WhatsApp and school apps

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

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: **[URL]**.

Have you checked your child's eligibility for Free School Meals or the School Essentials Grant? If you have any questions, please get in contact with **[PERSON and CONTACT]**. You can find out more at **[INSERT LA PAGE]**

We know that many parents at **[SCHOOL]** are feeling the pinch due to the cost of living. If you're on a low income and in receipt of certain benefits, you may be able to get support from **[LA NAME]**. If eligible, your child could get up to £200 for School Essentials, plus extra funding for your school. Find out more: **[INSERT URL]**

Social media posts: Free School Meals

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: www.gov.wales/get-help-school-costs

#FeedTheirFuture

Is your child in secondary school? If you receive certain benefits, you could get up to £200 per child to help with school costs. Check your eligibility: www.gov.wales/get-help-school-costs

#FeedTheirFuture

Eligible for Free School Meals? More support could be available to you through the School Essentials Grant. Claim what's yours: www.gov.wales/get-help-school-costs

#FeedTheirFuture

If you receive income support such as income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance or Child Tax Credit, then your child may be eligible for Free School Meals and up to £200 for School Essentials. To find out, visit: www.gov.wales/get-help-school-costs

#FeedTheirFuture

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

[INSERT SCHOOL] knows that school costs can 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: **[LINK]**.

Check your child's eligibility for Free School Meals with **[INSERT LA NAME]**. If they're eligible, your child could get a hot meal at school for free, help with School Essentials, and **(INSERT SCHOOL)** could get extra funding and resources. Learn more: **(LINK)**

If your child is eligible for Free School Meals, you could claim up to £200 of additional support per child for School Essentials. **[INSERT SCHOOL]** is urging all our parents and carers to claim what's theirs. Learn more: **[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 Free School Meals, and other support with School Essentials?'

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

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

Dear Parent/Guardian,

There is support available for Free School Meals and other School Essentials, but many parents/carers have not claimed the help available to them. We are writing to remind you of the two types of support your child might be eligible for.

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 eligible 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 of additional help available per child through the School Essentials Grant, plus extra funding for your school. The School Essentials Grant helps with the costs of School Essentials like uniforms and equipment to make sure they are ready for the school day.

Please note, if your child is in receipt of Free School Meals, you will still need to apply separately for the School Essentials Grant to access all of the funding available.

Kind regards

Checklist

Have you got everything you need?

- 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 to access all the financial support available



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Thank you.