

Dear Parent / Carer

Universal Primary Free School Meals (UPFSM) – Year 1 & 2 Pupils

Universal Primary Free School Meals (UPFSM) were rolled out to all pupils in full-time nursery and Reception class in September 2022.

From April 17th 2023, UPFSM will be available to all Year 1 & Year 2 pupils.

The aim is to then roll-out to Years 3 and 4 from September 2023 and to Years 5 and 6 by the end of the academic year 23/24, and further confirmation of these phases of the roll-out will be provided nearer the time.

In order to provide a smooth running of the service and to be able to provide lunches to those that have any special dietary requirements, this includes vegetarian preferences as well as ethical / religious diets, in addition to medical/allergen needs, you are required to fill in a Special Dietary Form and upload relevant documentation supporting any allergy / prescribed diet.

The form can be found using the link below:

<https://www.merthyr.gov.uk/do-it-online/request-or-apply/special-dietary-requirements-form/?lang=en-GB&>

It is imperative that this form is completed if your child has a special dietary requirement so that we can provide an appropriate menu.

All parents are encouraged to pre-book their children's meal(s) in advance via ParentPay. Your child will then choose their meal option in school at registration.

Free School Meals / PDG Access (School Uniform Grant)

Although universal entitlement to free school meals is being rolled out to all pupils in Primary school over the next year, **the Welsh Government still require eligible families to apply for 'free school meal' status.** Applying for 'free school meal' status will provide you with PDG Access Grant (School Uniform Grant) **of £225 per eligible child, which can be used on school uniform, PE equipment and IT for your child.**

If you receive any of the benefits outlined below and have not previously applied for free school meals for your child, please apply for the entitlement to Free School Meal status / PDG Access Grant (School Uniform Grant).

Qualifying benefits include:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guaranteed element of Pension Credit

- Child Tax Credit (provided not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

As well as receiving the PDG Access Grant of £225 per eligible child, your child's school and the Council will also receive additional money, which can be spent on supporting pupils learning in school.

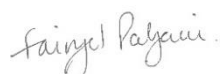
If you receive any of the qualifying benefits above, please apply for free school meal status / PDG Access (School Uniform grant) online at the following

<https://www.merthyr.gov.uk/resident/benefits-and-grants/apply-for-free-school-mealspdg-access-clothing-grant/>

If you have any children in primary school who already qualify for a free school meal, they will continue to do so, and no further action is needed for these children.

If you have any further queries regarding Universal Primary Free School Meals, please email UPFSM@merthyr.gov.uk or call 01685 725000 ask for the School Meals Department and leave a message. We will return your call within 10 working days or sooner.

Wishing you a wonderful Easter Break.



Fairyal Pabani

School Catering Manager