

Universal Primary Free School Meals

In September 2022, the rollout of Universal Primary Free School Meals (UPFSM) across Wales began, 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.

Within Rhondda Cynon Taf, the Council will be rolling out the offer as follows: -

- from 5th September 2022, all Reception aged pupils have been offered a UPFSM.
- from January 2023, the offer will be extended to include Year 1 pupils.
- from January 2023, the offer will be extended to include Nursery pupils who are eligible.
- from April 2023, the offer will be extended to include Year 2 pupils.
- from September 2023, the offer will be extended to include Year 3 and 4 pupils.
- from April 2024, the offer will be extended to include Year 5 and 6 pupils.

Frequently Asked Questions – Universal Primary Free School Meals (UPFSM)

Q: Why are you not providing UPFSM's to all Primary children from September 2022?

A: The Universal offer will result in many extra meals being cooked and served. Unfortunately, the existing school kitchens cannot support the increase; infrastructure, storage, equipment, and staffing are all challenges that we have been working hard to overcome since the announcement. Introducing year groups in a phased approach will provide time to resolve these challenges, whilst maintaining parity of delivery across the authority.

Q: Do I need to apply for a UPFSM when my child becomes eligible?

A: Parents do not need to apply for a UPFSM but those who would have previously applied for a Free School Meal should still do so.

Q: My child was in receipt of a Free School Meal but is now eligible for a UPFSM. Why do I need to still need to complete an application form for a Free School Meal?

A: You must apply for a Free School Meal, even if you are eligible for a UPFSM, as this will affect your possible entitlement to a PDG Access Grant. Please apply here: -

([Free School meals - Apply for free school meals | Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council \(rctcbc.gov.uk\)](#))

Q: If my child is eligible for UPFSM but going on a school trip will they still receive a meal?

A: Yes, a packed lunch will be provided for that day.

Q: If my child is ill and does not attend school, will I receive a payment instead?

A: No, payments are not provided for a pupil who is not in school to receive their UPFSM.

Q: My child receives their education at an alternative setting to a State Educational Establishment. Are they eligible for UPFSM?

A: No, the Welsh Government UPFSM grant conditions state that the provision is only available for a pupil in a state setting.

Q: I am not sure my child will eat the food provided every day; can they still bring a packed lunch?

A: We would strongly encourage all eligible pupils to take up their UPFSM, and we offer a variety of choice to support this. If, however, you do prefer to provide a packed lunch, then you can do so.

Q: My child already has a special diet in place, but until now I have paid for their meal. When they become eligible for UPFSM, will I have to re-apply for the diet?

A: If there has been no change to the dietary needs, there is no need to re-apply for a special diet. If anything has changed, we will need to make the necessary arrangements before your child receives a meal. If you are in any doubt as to what dietary information we currently hold, please contact us at cateringservices@rctcbc.gov.uk.

If you would like further clarification on any of the answers provided above, or, have a question we have not yet answered, please contact us at cateringservices@rctcbc.gov.uk or call 01443 281141.