

## **Universal Primary Free School Meals – Nursery Pupil Eligibility**

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.

### **Local Authority Provided Full-Time Nursery Provision**

From January 2023, the offer will be extended to pupils who attend Local Authority\* Nursery provision on a full-time basis (morning and afternoon sessions) in accordance with the Councils admissions policy: -

- All pupils aged 4 years, between 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022 and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022, will be eligible for a free school meal from January 2023.
- All pupils aged 4 years, between 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, will be eligible for a free school meal from April 2023.
- All pupils aged 4 years, between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023, will be eligible for a free school meal from September 2023.

\*To assist your understanding of our full-time Nursery admissions criteria, an excerpt from the Councils 'Starting School' booklet has been provided below; this sets out the admission arrangements for Nursery pupils.

**NOTE: Some schools do offer, and directly fund, a full-time Nursery place from their own school budget; in this case, pupils are not eligible to receive a UPFSM.**

(Excerpt from 'Starting School Booklet 2022-2023')

#### **2.1: Pre-Nursery / Nursery Education**

The Council continuously reviews and reserves the right to amend its admission procedures for non-statutory pre-nursery and nursery education.

##### **2.1.1 Pre-Nursery Education**

Pre- Nursery Education is provided part time to children the term following their 3rd birthday. Parents will be able to apply online in September for a pre-nursery place to start in January (term after their child's third birthday) and can apply online in January for a pre-nursery place to start in April (term after their child's third birthday).

##### **2.1.2 Nursery Education**

Nursery Education is provided part time from the September i.e. the start of the academic year in which the child turns 4. Full time places are provided the term after the child turns four.

## **Frequently Asked Questions – Universal Primary Free School Meals (UPFSM) for Nursery Pupils**

### **Q: My child has their 4th birthday on 30/09/22 – when will they receive a UPFSM?**

A: Any child who has their 4th birthday on or between 01/09/2022 – 31/12/2022 and attends both morning and afternoon Nursery sessions (same day), will be eligible for a UPFSM from January 2023.

### **Q: My child attends full-time Nursery and is not offered a lunch under UPFSM, but I know there are others in the class that do get a meal, how is that possible?**

A: The child may either be eligible to Free School Meals (not UPFSM) or may be of an age where their full-time position within the Nursery is funded by the Local Authority rather than the school's budget. Some schools do offer, and directly fund, a full-time Nursery place from their own school budget, but under the Welsh Government grant conditions, pupils will not be eligible to receive a UPFSM until they are formerly full-time (Local Authority funded).

### **Q: I understand that my child is not currently eligible for Free School meals or a UPFSM, but they do attend the morning and the afternoon. Can I pay for them to have a meal?**

A: Yes, we can provide a meal; the school will explain the payment process to you.

### **Q: My child has a food allergy – can they still receive a school meal?**

A: Catering Services will endeavour to provide a special diet for any child who has the medical documentation, which details their needs.

The procedure can be viewed at

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Resident/SchoolsandLearning/Schoolcatering/RelatedDocuments/SpecialDietProcedure.pdf>

We would recommend you email [cateringservices@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:cateringservices@rctcbc.gov.uk) so your request can be allocated quickly to the appropriate Officer.

We aim to provide the specified menu within 14 days; therefore, it is recommended you contact us in advance of your child requiring a school lunch.

## **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: -

<https://forms.rctcbc.gov.uk/en/Web/Coronavirusfsmsignup/ContactDetails>

### **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](mailto: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](mailto:cateringservices@rctcbc.gov.uk) or call 01443 281141.