

Dear Parents and Carers

Free School Meals (FSM) – January 19

I am writing to ask you to consider whether your child may be eligible for free school meals. If your child is eligible for free school meals it means they can enjoy delicious, healthy meals without the bills and the fuss of making packed lunches. Many children at our school are already eating free school meals, and your child may be able to have them too. School meals will give your child a real appetite for learning and help them to achieve their full potential.

There is nothing healthier for your child and your family's budget than free school meals. As professional cooks prepare the meals for your child, it saves you having to worry about the effort and expense of making packed lunches every day.

Your child may be eligible for free school meals if you are in receipt of any of the following benefits/support payments:

- Income Support
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit, provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and their annual income does not exceed £16,190
- Guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit 'run-on' - the payment someone may receive for a further four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit.
- Young people who receive Income Related Employment and Support Allowance, Universal Credit, Income Support or Income Based Job Seekers Allowance in their own right may also be eligible to receive FSM.

Your child will also need to be attending school full time, which can include full days at nursery and sixth form students. In order for your child to receive free school meals, you will need to fill out an application form either online by visiting www.caerphilly.gov.uk and typing free school meals into the search field or complete an application form which is available at our school and return to Catering Services, Caerphilly County Borough Council, Penallta House, Tredomen Park, Ystrad Mynach, Hengoed, CF82 7PG.

If you pay for your child to have school meals you could save around **£500** per year if your child qualifies for free school meals.

You may also qualify for the Welsh Government Pupil Development Grant (PDG) - Access Funding of up to £125, this is available to pupils who are eligible for free school meals or are looked after by a Local Authority if they are:

- entering reception class in primary school
- entering year 7 in secondary school
- aged 4 or 11 in special schools, special needs resource bases or pupil referral units

The purpose of this PDG funding which is to provide grant assistance to families on low incomes for the purchase of:

- School uniform including coats and shoes;
- School sports kit including footwear;
- Uniform for enrichment activities, including but not limited to, scouts; guides; cadets; martial arts; sports; performing arts or dance;
- Equipment e.g. school bags and stationery;
- Specialist equipment where new curriculum activities begin such as design and technology; and
- Equipment for out of school hour's trips such as outdoor learning e.g. waterproofs.

Think of the time you would save if your child is eligible and has free school meals instead of packed lunches, you could save up to 190 hours a year, which is the time needed to make packed lunches that meet the nutritional standards of school meals – that's just over a week!

Our school will also receive **£1150** additional funding for every child registered for Free School Meals. This funding must be directly targeted at Free School Meal pupils. This year we have used that additional funding for:

Support teacher small group literacy/numeracy interventions and provision of a family engagement officer

I am writing to all parents and carers to ask them to make a claim if they believe that they may be entitled to claim free school meals for their children and do not already do so. Our catering team provides an excellent range of healthy lunch options that are enjoyed daily by a significant number of our pupils. Your child may well be able to access these free of charge.

If you require any further advice, please contact Catering Services on 01443 864055 (or email catering@caerphilly.gov.uk). A member of the team will be able to advise you.

Yours sincerely



Mrs B. Davies
Headteacher