

Universal Primary Free School Meals – Nursery pupil eligibility

Phased Rollout of 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.

Following the successful roll-out of UPFSM to Reception, Years 1-4, and eligible Nursery age pupils in Rhondda Cynon Taf, the next phase is to commence from 8th April 2024, where the offer will be extended to include all Year 5 and 6 pupils and **eligible** Nursery pupils.

Local Authority Provided Full-Time Nursery Provision

From January 2023, the offer was 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: -

Eligible Nursery pupils are those 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 1st September 2023 and 31st December 2023, will be eligible for a free school meal from January 2024.

- **All pupils aged 4 years, between 1st January 2024 and 31st March 2024, will be eligible for a free school meal from April 2024.**

- All pupils aged 4 years, between 1st April 2024 and 31st August 2024, will be eligible for a free school meal from September 2024.

**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 Universal primary free school meal.

(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.

Do you have a query about Nursery pupil eligibility? These Frequently Asked Questions will hopefully help...

Q: My child has their 4th birthday on 30/04/24– when will they receive UPFSM?

A: Any child who has their 4th birthday 1st April 2024 and 31st August 2024 and attends both morning and afternoon Nursery sessions (same day) will be eligible for a UPFSM from September 2024.

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 Universal Primary Free School Meals 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 grant conditions, pupils will not be eligible to receive a Universal primary free school meal until they are formerly full-time (Local Authority funded).*

Q: I understand that my child is not currently eligible for Free School meals or Universal Primary Free School Meals, 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 requires a Medically Prescribed Diet – can they still receive a school meal?

Medically Prescribed Dietary Requirement

Does your nursery/primary aged child have a food allergy/intolerance or a medical condition, which would require them to need a Medically Prescribed Diet?

If so, Catering Services has an online facility where a medically prescribed diet can be requested.

If you need to register your child as having a medically prescribed dietary requirement, then please complete the Form below. You will need to upload medical evidence, from a registered medical practitioner or dietitian, confirming the child's dietary requirement(s).

The medically prescribed diet application can be accessed at:

<http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/MedicallyPrescribedDiet>

Q: My child already has a Medically Prescribed 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 Medically Prescribed 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 do 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.

The following questions are applicable to other year groups: -

Q: Do I need to apply for a Universal Primary Free School Meal when my child becomes eligible?

A: Parents do not need to apply for the Universal Primary Free School Meal, but those who would have previously applied for a Free School Meal should still do.

Q: My child was in receipt of a Free School Meal but now gets a Universal Primary Free School Meal, why do I need to still complete an application?

A: The application for Free School Meals is linked to other schemes including uniform, if an application is not made, your child will miss out on associated benefits. Please apply here: -

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

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 doesn't 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.