

Free School Meals: FAQ's

A. Who qualifies for free school meals and when will they start?

- **Will my child have a free school meal from September, or will I have to pay?**
If your child is in reception or years 1 and 2, they will be entitled to a free school meal from September. If your child is in years 3, 4, 5 and 6 you will have to continue to pay if you want your child to have school meals.
- **When will Key Stage 2 School children get free school meals?**
Welsh Government have advised that free school meals should be extended to key stage 2 children from September 2023.
- **My child is in Key Sage 2 School and currently has a free school meal, will this continue?**
Yes, there are no changes for anyone who qualifies for free school meals.
- **My child is in Foundation Phase do I need to do anything for them to qualify for free school meals?**
No, all children in reception and years 1 and 2 will automatically qualify for a free school meal. Parents will however have to register for Parent Pay as this will allow you to access menus and select meal choices.
- **Does my child have to have a free school meal, or can I provide a packed lunch?**
Your child does not have to have a free school meal and you are free to provide packed lunches if you would prefer.
- **Can I have money instead of a meal so that I can provide a packed lunch?**
No, there is no cash alternative to a free school meal.

B. Dietary Preferences & Needs

- **How will you cater for my child's food allergy or intolerance?**
If your child does have a medically diagnosed food allergy , please can you contact the School's Catering office on 01633 644156 and we will arrange a meeting with you to discuss your child needs. We work with an Aneurin Bevan Health Board dietician to assess dietary needs and develop suitable menus. If your child does not have a

medically diagnosed allergy or intolerance, we will not be able to provide a separate menu.

- **My child is a fussy eater, can they have a menu that provides them with their preferred choices?**

No. We are required to provide menus that comply with Welsh Government's Healthy Eating Agenda, therefore unless your child has a medically diagnosed allergy or food intolerance, we will not provide alternative menu's.

- **There are too many puddings on the menu, and I do not feel it is right that my child is given a sweet dessert every day.**

The menu is put through a vigorous process as set out in the Healthy Eating Agenda and has been issued with a certificate of compliancy, fresh fruit is available as an option if the child does not want the dessert of the day.

- **My child is an insulin dependent diabetic.**

There is a carbohydrate count that accompanies the menu that has been worked out and approved by a diabetic nurse at Aneurin Bevan Health Board.

- **My child is coming home from school stating they are hungry.**

The portion of food that is supplied follows the Healthy Eating Agenda, there is bread and a salad bar that is freely available to all children if they feel they require more food.

- **My child is not a vegetarian but would sometimes prefer something off the vegetarian menu.**

A child can choose a meal from any part off the main current menu however, they cannot choose a meal from a special dietary need's menu i.e. gluten free.

- **Can my child have a different meal from the one that I have ordered?**

We will always provide the meal that has been ordered and will not provide an alternative to ensure that we are complying with the parents wishes and their chosen dietary preferences.

- **I forgot to order a meal through Parent Pay, will my child get a free school meal?**

If your child is in reception, years 1 and 2 then your child will be provided with a free school meal. If your child is in years 3,4,5 and 6, if your child is not normally entitled to free school meals, a meal will be provided and you will be asked to reimburse the meal cost in line with current practice.

C. General Questions

- **Why are free school meals being introduced?**

Universal free school meals is a policy commitment arising from Welsh Labour and Plaid Cymru's co-operative agreement. All Welsh Local Authorities have been asked to put

changes in place to ensure that we are able to roll out the free school meals from September.

- **Will the cost of school meals for Key Stage 2 pupils increase in September 22.**

No, the cost of school meals will remain at £2.50

- **Why aren't all primary aged children getting free school meals from September?**

Welsh Government has introduced a phased approach to the implementation of free school meals to give Local Authorities the time to undertake changes to kitchens so that they have enough space and equipment to cook the additional meals. They also need to increase staffing numbers, undertake training and develop new supply chains. We have already started work in Monmouthshire to make sure we are ready and able to roll out free school meals to junior aged pupils in 2023, inline with Welsh Governments timeline.