

Cost of the School Day – fact sheet

School Meals

- No child should go hungry. Local authorities and schools should work in partnership with families experiencing difficulties with payment of school meals to find a solution to ensure no child goes without a meal at lunchtime. [Healthy eating in maintained schools: guidance for education providers | GOV.WALES](#)
- There should be a system in place where parents are reminded in a timely fashion of what the balance is on their child's account, so that parents are prompted to take action.
- In the case of non-payment make every effort to contact the parent to find a solution.
- If you are aware of vulnerable families that are struggling with school meal debt, let the local authority catering team know.
- If parents are struggling with school meal debt, they should contact the local authority catering team, to discuss setting up a payment plan.
- Local authorities and schools that charge for food or drink provided in schools can choose to implement a variable pricing structure ('flexible charging'). It is a matter for local authorities and schools to determine whether or not to use this power. <https://gov.wales/charging-food-and-drink-maintained-schools-guidance-education-providers>
- Through flexible charging local authorities and governing bodies could charge less for school meals provided to children of families on low incomes who are not eligible for free school meals.

Children in Wales resources

- When taking decisions that have a financial impact on families, Children in Wales have developed a suite of guides that can help you ['Price of Pupil Poverty Guides - Taking a Whole School Approach to improve the wellbeing of children from low income and disadvantaged backgrounds'](#).
- The guides were developed to help schools and educators in Wales to consider the impact of poverty on the everyday school experience of pupils from low income and disadvantaged families and addresses key areas that impacts pupils the most.
- Taking a whole school approach, the Guides identify low and no cost solutions in respect of:
 - Understanding poverty
 - School Uniforms and Clothing
 - Food and hunger

- Participation in the life of the school
 - Home – School Relations
- Children in Wales are also currently working with a growing number of schools across Wales to make a real difference for their pupils by supporting school leaders and teaching staff to implement these guides.
 - There is an opportunity for schools to sign up to receive this support; to access key resources, free training, guidance and ways to implement the guides in their schools and to take action to ensure that the costs of the school day is not a barrier to pupils learning and well-being. If you would like to be involved, receive further information or would like training on the guides please contact: kate.thomas@childreninwales.org.uk
 - The guides can be used in line with funding secured through the PDG agenda.
 - The guides can be accessed on the [Welsh Government's Education Hwb website](#) or The Children In Wales website - [Children in Wales | Price of Pupil Poverty](#)

School Uniform guidance

- We want to ensure that school uniforms are affordable so that no family feels unable to apply for admission or to attend a particular school.
- The statutory guidance for school governing bodies on school uniform and appearance policies is statutory and as such governing bodies and head teachers must have regard to it when formulating and revising their school uniform policies.
<https://gov.wales/school-uniform-and-appearance-policy-guidance-governing-bodies>
- The guidance provides clear and useful support for governing bodies to make decisions on school uniform policies in respect of access, affordability and flexibility.
- The guidance lists a number of areas governing bodies should consider to keep down the cost of school uniform, including the requirement of logoed items.
- The Welsh Government understands that requiring school logos on polo shirts, jumpers, blazers and PE kit, obtainable from specialist suppliers can be costly and advises that schools should limit these items.
- Governing bodies should regularly review single supplier arrangements and should seek to ensure items are affordable.

Financial assistance and support

- The Welsh Government has a longstanding commitment to supporting information and advice services so we can feel confident some of the most vulnerable people in our society have access to the free and impartial advice that they need to resolve problems with their housing, welfare benefits, employment and managing their financial commitments.

The Welsh Government has introduced initiatives set out below to ensure that the people, who need it most, continue to get the help and advice they require.

If, once having considered the guidance above, it remains necessary to ask families to contribute, you can signpost them to the information below.

The attached leaflet summaries the financial assistance that might be available to help families. The leaflet includes advice on:

- Loss of income
- UK Government support
- Housing
- Financial help
- Living costs
- Health & Well-being
- Family support
- Helpful contacts

[Benefits Support ENGLISH.pdf](#)  Benefits Support ENGLISH.pdf

'Claim what's yours' - Take-up Campaign

We know that there are thousands of people in Wales who are not yet claiming the welfare benefits that they are entitled to. The Welsh Government has launched a take-up campaign '*Claim What's Yours*'.

Advicelink Cymru offers free and confidential advice on a range of subjects such as:

- welfare benefits
- debt
- employment
- education
- housing
- immigration
- discrimination.

We are directing people to a designated campaign page www.gov.wales/claimwhatsyours where we encourage them to call Advicelink Cymru's helpline - **0808 250 5700**

Financial help awareness raising raining for frontline workers

Dangos is a Welsh Government funded initiative to provide free online information sessions for front-line workers to raise awareness and knowledge about the financial help that is available to the people they support. There are still some sessions being delivered until the end of December. For more information, please click [here](#)