



9 July 2024

Dear colleague

I am writing to let you know that the window for the School Essentials Grant opened on 1 July, and to ask for your support to make sure eligible families apply.

I am passionately committed to improving the attainment of all our pupils. Removing barriers to participating in education, including helping families with the cost of the school day, including school uniform, is so vital, especially in the current climate.

There are excellent initiatives in place to support families, from clothes banks to swap shops in schools. School Essentials Grant is another route of support for families. From September I'm proud that all state primary schools in Wales will offer a free school meal to children.

Registering as eligible for free school meals with your Local Authority unlocks access to the School Essentials Grant. It also means schools get more funding. With the introduction of free school meals for primary pupils, many parents/carers do not realise that schools will lose out unless they continue to register as eligible.

So, I'd be very grateful if you could spread the word by sharing <https://www.gov.wales/get-help-school-costs>. Even if they don't need the grant, registering as eligible will mean schools get additional funding.

Keeping the cost of school uniforms low is another way of helping families. Following a consultation last year, the Welsh Government published revised School Uniform statutory guidance, to better support governing bodies in making their decisions on school uniform policies in respect of access, affordability and flexibility. The main changes to the revised guidance provided that:

- branded uniform (which includes but is not limited to logo bearing items) should not be a compulsory requirement for pupils; and
- schools should ensure that arrangements are in place so that second-hand uniforms are available for pupils to acquire.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

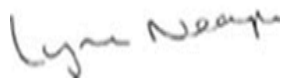
You can find the guidance in full here <https://www.gov.wales/school-uniform-and-appearance-policy-guidance-governing-bodies-wg23-17-html>

This guidance is statutory and as such governing bodies and head teachers must have regard to it when formulating and revising their school uniform policies.

Children in Wales have also published helpful case studies highlighting how schools are keeping costs down, which can be found here <https://www.childreninwales.org.uk/news/school-uniform-resources-now-available-schools/>

As we approach the end of term, can I take this opportunity to say a heartfelt thank you to you and your teams for all you have done to support our learners this year – I really do appreciate it.

Diolch o galon.



Lynne Neagle AS/MS

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education