

Mini Guide: A reminder for schools - What you can do to continue helping those pupils from low income and disadvantaged families during school closure and COVID 19



The Price of Pupil Poverty

**TAKING A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH
TO IMPROVING THE WELL-BEING OF
CHILDREN FROM LOW INCOME AND
DISADVANTAGED FAMILIES**

For further information on the main guides and the project please contact:
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Understanding
Poverty

1

School Uniform
and Clothing

2

Food and Hunger

3

Participation in the
Life of the School

4

Home-School
Relationship

5



THE PRICE OF PUPIL POVERTY

Focus On:

Food and Hunger

3

FSM | PDG Access | Food Banks

Home-School
Relationship

5

Resources & Equipment | Parental Engagement

The main guides:

The recently developed Price of Pupil Poverty guides for schools in Wales, designed in Wales, raise awareness of pupil poverty and sets out the impact poverty has on a child's day to day life in a school setting, and provides tangible and cost effective solutions that can contribute to improved learner well-being.

We have been asking schools to consider the guides and providing advice on how to implement an action plan to create a more equitable experience for their pupils. We understand that, at this difficult time with school closures now in place, the guides will be difficult to take forward and progress.

It is quite evident that there will be an even greater need to take into account the themes of these guides once the pandemic is over, with a likelihood of more pupils in poverty than before, and we encourage schools to consider how these guides can be applied in the future.

However, there is still a responsibility now to prioritise the well-being of pupils and ensure that the attainment gap for those in poverty does not increase during this unprecedented and uncertain time.

With this in mind and in line with the Price of pupil poverty guides:

We ask you to take special consideration to the following key areas from the guide (see above) and, where possible, have suggested a few solutions and provided information that may help to ensure that those pupils in poverty are not left behind over the next few weeks and coming months.

The full guides can be found on the Welsh Government's Education Hwb website - <https://bit.ly/2uZCZ9w>



Children in Wales
Plant yng Nghymru

THE PRICE OF PUPIL POVERTY

All children have the right to adequate nutritious food and clean water (Article 24, UNCRC)



The Problem: A high percentage of pupils in Wales are already eligible for Free School Meals (FSM). Due to the current pandemic and economic issue this brings, there is likely to be an increase in those numbers.

Loss of jobs, business, people furloughed with reduced pay and more accessing universal credit means more families will find themselves eligible for FSM for the first time. While those not eligible, but falling into food insecurity as a result of financial loss, will need extra support and use of food banks is and will increase.

The Welsh Government have guaranteed funding and guidance to Local Authorities for the provision of FSM until schools re-open or until the end of August at least.

Steps you can take to help families in your school

- Ensure all parents/carers are aware of the FSM programme and are still accessing during this period.
- Support parents/carers with information on how to apply for FSM.
- Encourage parents/carers to go to their Local Authority to seek information.
- Identify/target new pupils who may now be eligible for FSM for the first time. Vital they are encouraged to claim.
- Provide information on local food banks and how to access.
- Point parents/carers towards Discretionary Assistant Fund (DAF) in particular the Emergency Assistance Payment (EAP) for those experiencing financial hardship or delay in benefit payments.
- Parents/Carers can use Pupil Development Grant access grant to help with costs associated to the school day which may reduce pressure with regards to everyday finances.

Useful Links

Free school meal guidance: <https://gov.wales/free-school-meals-coronavirus-guidance-schools>

Free school meal guidance by Local Authority: <https://gov.wales/find-out-about-free-school-meals-during-coronavirus-outbreak> Allows parents/carers to check how to continue to receive free school meals by searching either their postcode or Local Authority

Food bank: <https://www.trusselltrust.org/get-help/find-a-foodbank> National charity helping provide families with food when they can't afford food—put in postcode to find nearest support

Pupil Development Grant: <https://gov.wales/pupil-development-grant-access> If you are on a low income your child could be eligible for a PDG

Discretionary Assistant Fund <https://gov.wales/discretionary-assistance-fund-daf/how-apply> (Emergency Assistance Payment) during COVID 19: Between 1 May to 31 July 2020, applications will be treated with greater flexibility and discretion.

Resources and Equipment - Support for pupils to continue learning @ home



The Problem: Barriers to learning via lack of access to resources and equipment outside the classroom has always been an issue with regards to equity and bridging the attainment gap for pupils.

Now, more than, ever despite the hard work being done to ensure effective home schooling and distance learning, the need to create a fairer approach is crucial.

Do pupils have access to digital devices? What resources/equipment do pupils have at home to undertake tasks for learning and importantly well-being?



Steps you can take to help families in your school

- Consider renting or loaning out IT to targeted/ identified families that don't have access.
- Undertake a survey/audit to identify what pupils have.
- Can existing products used/already sourced for school be disseminated along with FSM?
- Consider the resources and items required when setting work.
- Create equipment resource packs – these could include items that are required to complete tasks such as – scissors, glue, cellotape, pencils, pens, paper, calculator, books (reading-appropriate ages).
- Point parents/carers towards DAF, in particular the Emergency Assistance Payment (EAP) for those experiencing financial hardship or delay in benefit payments.

Useful Links

Pupil Development Grant: <https://gov.wales/pupil-development-grant-access>

If you are on a low income your child could be eligible for a PDG

Discretionary Assistant Fund <https://gov.wales/discretionary-assistance-fund-daf/how-apply>

(Emergency Assistance Payment) during COVID 19: Between 1 May to 31 July 2020, applications will be treated with greater flexibility and discretion

National Education Union: <https://neu.org.uk/coronavirus-what-you-need-know-supporting-students-without-digital-access>

'Need To Know' document to provide practical guidance on supporting children living in low income families with their learning

National Education Union: <https://neu.org.uk/advice/create-box> Advice on creating resource boxes containing physical learning and creative materials for families on low income

Parental Engagement - Keeping in touch and effective communication



The Problem: Importance of the home-school relationship cannot be over emphasised. Evidence suggests children whose parents engage positively in school life are more likely to achieve better educational outcomes.

Now, more than ever, it is imperative that open communication and engagement still occurs. With distance learning now a reality and parents home schooling, it is critical to find a way to ensure effective engagement is happening and there is a continuation to reach out, even when they are being unresponsive.

The more engaged parents are, the more likely they will be able to help their children and ask for help and support on all matters during this very difficult time.

Steps you can take to help families in your school

- Communication should be a two way thing. Consult with parents on what they need/works best at this time?
- Ensure positive parental engagement - weekly phone calls, once a week open session - where parents can contact you for conversation about school work.
- Ensure a variety of methods to pass on information is in place.
- Offer opportunities for parents' own learning (can you support them to support their children?)
- Can your school PTA support at this time? Are there parents who may wish to volunteer their time and have particular skills that could be of use at this time?
- Consider setting up a parent council or hub as a means to communicate with a small group of parents to disseminate information.

Useful Links

CSC Consortium—Distance Learning Considerations for Schools:

<https://www.cscjes-cronfa.co.uk/repository/resource/79b366e5-d0cc-4ce1-8a10-4566eb78c5c5/en>

Guidance for schools regarding distance learning strategies

Stay Safe. Stay Learning: <https://www.cscjes-cronfa.co.uk/repository/resource/79b366e5-d0cc-4ce1-8a10-4566eb78c5c5/en> For well-being of staff and students across the country while supporting learners to access distance learning

Education Endowment Foundation:

https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/Covid-19_Resources/Resources_for_schools/Communicating_Effectively_with_Families_-_Guide_for_Schools.pdf Resources designed to be used by schools and parents/carers

ParentKind –Bringing together home and school:

<https://www.parentkind.org.uk/> Resources and advice for PTA's and setting up parent councils