



19th October 2023

Free School Meals and Uniform Grants

SMILE - School Meals Improve Learning Environments
UNITY - Uniforms Nurture Inclusivity, Teamwork and Youthfulness

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I wish to remind all parents of the availability of the Free School Meals and Uniform Grant, from the Education Authority. This important source of funding has played a key role in supporting families and children in Rathfriland High School.

In a world where success often hinges on access to resources, Free School Meals level the playing field. Celebrities including Jamie Oliver and Marcus Rashford have been vocal advocates, emphasising how a nutritious meal can empower children to focus on their studies.

As a school we are aware of the statistical evidence. Studies show that children who receive nutritious meals at school perform better academically, have improved concentration and are more likely to graduate. Conversely, a child who arrives at school without having a proper breakfast or one that does not enjoy a nutritious lunch, may be distracted by hunger, making it challenging to fully engage in lessons. Free School Meals provide support to families and children to ensure each child can learn and thrive.

Applying for Free School Meals also contributes to the funding provided by the Department of Education to Rathfriland High School. Therefore, I would encourage all eligible parents to make an application. To support you in this process, I attach a range of information on the benefits of free school meals, the financial value of this grant and the corresponding uniform grant along with details on entitlement.

As a school we can also offer support with the application process, please see the attached Advocate Policy for details on how to access this support.

Your sincerely,

Ian Matthews

Principal