

Penyrheol Comprehensive School



To Achieve You Need To Believe
I Lwyddo Rhaid Credu

e-FSM Policy



Principles, Values and Entitlements

One in two people and one third of children in Wales live in poverty. There is a strong association between living in poverty and low educational qualifications with this being both a cause and an effect of poverty in Wales. Through its Tackling Poverty Action Plan the Welsh Government has committed itself to mitigating the effect of poverty, assisting those in poverty to improve their chances of employment and preventing future poverty. Improving the educational qualifications of those in poverty - and in particular narrowing the gap in achievement between children who are eligible for free school meals (eFSM) and those who are not - is a key component of the plan.

While schools have a critically important part to play in overcoming the impact of poverty on educational achievement, they cannot do it alone. Parents/Guardians, families and communities also have a crucial part to play. To provide additional support for schools to address the national priority there is the Pupil Development Grant (PDG). The Welsh Government has strengthened the accountability of schools' use of this funding and asked the Regional Education Consortia to do the same.

As a school in receipt of the PDG, we are accountable to our parents/guardians and school community for how we are using this additional resource to narrow the achievement gaps of our students.

In making decisions on the use of the PDG we:

- use the latest evidence based research on proven strategies which work to narrow the attainment gaps and adapt these as necessary to meet the needs of our students
- are transparent in our reporting of how we have used the PDG, so that our parents/guardians, interested stakeholders and Estyn are fully aware of how this additional resource has been used to make a difference
- encourage take up of FSM by working proactively with our parents and guardians in a sensitive and supportive manner to remove any potential barriers or stigma attached to claiming FSM. In doing so, we also recognise the vital role that parents and guardians play in the lives of their children
- ensure there is robust monitoring and evaluation in place to account for the use of the PDG, by the school and the Governing Body

- recognise the fact that eFSM students are not a homogeneous group and cover a wide range of needs. As such the strategies we use to raise attainment take these group and individual needs fully into account
- use high quality teaching and learning as the preferred way to narrow the gaps in attainment in the first instance. We also use high quality interventions with proven evidence of impact to assist our students who need additional support in a time limited way
- use the PDG to enrich the experience of students to raise aspirations and educate the whole child.
- The school's plan to improve the educational achievement of eFSM pupils is included within the overall School Improvement Plan and its aims are to promote progress and remove barriers to learning for eFSM pupils.

We use the funding available to:

- implement and use data tracking systems to identify learners' needs, target interventions and monitor impact
- provide additional academic and social support through employing Pastoral Support Officers for each year group in school. These staff are involved on a daily basis with supporting the needs of learners e.g. through mentoring, making contact with parents etc.
- enhance teaching and learning by providing Literacy and Numeracy Catch-Up programmes of support for target pupils who have fallen behind their peers
- improve pupils' reading skills by providing intensive reading catch-up before school for target pupils
- improve attendance of the target group through employing an Attendance Officer with a particular focus on e-FSM learners
- maintain a Well-Being Room and Cynnydd Learning Coach to provide additional support to vulnerable learners, including eFSM pupils
- work in partnership with other schools, the community and other organisations to develop our understanding and expertise around eFSM learners
- develop capacity and good practice across the school in relation to eFSM learners through a School Improvement Group





- support learners and their families by providing financial support, where needed, for educational resources and activities e.g. purchasing GCSE revision guides, paying for transport for school visits etc.

Roles and Responsibilities

We expect all members of our school community to be committed to raising standards and narrowing the attainment gaps for our students.

The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team

The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team are responsible for implementing this policy. They will ensure that all staff members are aware of their responsibilities in narrowing the gaps of our students. They will also ensure that staff members are given appropriate support and relevant professional development opportunities to accelerate students' progress and attainment.

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to include the following information in the annual report for the Governing Body:

- the progress made towards narrowing the gaps, by year group, for disadvantaged students
- an outline of the provision that has been made since the last annual report
- an evaluation of the cost effectiveness, in terms of the progress made by the students receiving a particular provision, when compared with other forms of support.
- The School Business Manager will monitor the PDG on an annual basis to ensure it is providing value for money.

Teaching and Support Staff

- include development points relating to provision for eFSM pupils in the Department Improvement Plans written for each department
- can identify the eFSM pupils in each class that they teach or support
- as they are indicated on class registers on SIMS

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their classrooms which enable students from disadvantaged backgrounds to thrive
- plan and deliver curricula and lessons to a high standard so that gaps can be narrowed and improvements maintained
- keep up-to-date with teaching strategies and research, which have a proven track record in narrowing the gaps in attainment.

Pastoral Teams

- closely monitor eFSM pupils' weekly data relating to attendance, rewards, behaviours and wellbeing
- may put in place mentoring for eFSM pupils with a Mentor being either a pupil's Head of Year, Pastoral Support Officer, Form Tutor or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. This is to ensure that eFSM pupils' academic progress is not limited due to a lack of resources or opportunity to succeed
- address pupils' personal and social needs; pupils can be referred to a School Counsellor and Educational Psychologist
- undertake targeted contacting of parents for events such as Parents Evenings
- undertake additional 'soft' mentoring through the Pastoral Support Officers linked to each year team, which is particularly effective for vulnerable pupils within the year group.

Governing Body

Our Governing Body has an important role in ensuring our school complies with legislation and that this policy, along with its specific stated actions for narrowing the gaps, is implemented.





Note:

The eFSM Policy is intended to reinforce the inclusive nature of education at Penyrheol Comprehensive School. However, it is recognised that there are pupils whose families have not claimed their eFSM entitlement for a number of reasons and other families who, while not entitled to claim, can be facing financial pressures. We want to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity, should they so wish, to participate in all aspects of school life, therefore, if there are any concerns regarding payments for visits/activities or the purchase of uniform and/or personal equipment, parents/guardians should contact the school for a confidential discussion.

The eFSM Policy will be reviewed every three years.