

**Update on the Consultation about Free School Breakfast, June 2015**

**Background**

* Due to the difficult decisions that will be necessary to meet efficiency saving targets of 10% for the education service, the need has arisen to review this budget. A fine balance must be achieved between ensuring the delivery of efficiency savings, whilst reducing the effects of cutbacks on frontline delegated school budgets. One area for consideration is the Free School Breakfast clubs, with a current budget of £385,000.
* The free breakfast scheme was introduced into primary schools in 2004, via a grant from Welsh Government. In April 2013 this grant was transferred to the RSG, and it was not ring-fenced for the scheme.
* It is a statutory obligation to provide free school breakfasts for pupils if the Authority receives a request from school governors, or if a scheme was already established before April 2013.
* Current guidance states that Governors have the right to bring the scheme to an end and establish a different scheme.
* By September 2014 the scheme existed in 46 primary schools. This constitutes 98% of the Authority’s schools.
* Merthyr is the only Authority with more schools participating (100%). Gwynedd has 73% of their schools participating in the scheme and Conwy has 93%. Newport is the LA with the least take up with only 29%.
* The daily average number of pupils who received free school breakfast in 13/14 was 1,321 (24%); at an approximate cost of £1.46 (40p food and the remainder being staffing costs).
* 23% of pupils frequenting the club are entitled to Free School Meals.
* Only 52% of pupils who are entitled to FSM, use the breakfast clubs (Autumn 2014 figures).
* The Council has the right to end the provision if it deems that it is ‘unreasonable’ to continue with the provision. The definition of what may be seen as being ‘unreasonable’ is unclear.

**Recent actions**

* Task and Finish group established following the request of the elected members. Constitutes 3 head teachers (Y Graig, Morswyn and Moelfre); 3 Chairpersons of Governing Bodies (Borth, Rhoscolyn, Esceifiog); 3 elected members (Cllrs. D R Thomas, John Griffith, Ieuan Williams); officers (Delyth Molyneux, Gareth Jones, Idris Parry); Local Voices/Medrwn Môn/CAB: Sally Haywood and Lyndsey Williams.
* Agreed to consult with parents via ‘survey monkey’, consultation period ended 15th May. Only parents were able to complete the survey and could do so only once.
* Excellent response of over 1000 responses, with social media playing a key role, 83% responders through Facebook posting.

**Main findings from the questionnaire.**

* 10.9% of respondents claimed free school meals.
* 93% of respondents used the breakfast club for their children.
* 93% used the club in order to access work.
* In response to the questions about costs and possible effect of having to pay for the club, 30% believed that paying 80p-£1 was acceptable, and 32% noted that any fee would affect their family budget.
* To the question about what they would do if a fee was introduced, parents responded as follows: 23% said they would use friends or family for childcare. 17% would reduce other expenditure; 34% would consider reducing working hours; 26% responded ‘other’ and of these, 13% said they would give their children breakfast at home, and 30% said they would pay the fee.

**Next steps**

* Receive further legal advice about what is possible on the basis of the questionnaire’s findings.
* Share the results of the questionnaire with schools, and the possible options in order to facilitate a discussion with Governing Bodies.
* Task and Finish group to discuss the results, and decide on the range of possible options to take forward for elected members’ decision.
* Continue to update the minister and his officers.

**Possible outline options, for discussion and agreement**

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| **Option** | **Description** |
| 1 | Keep to the present scheme BUT either |
| 1a | Change employment from an **hour to half an hour** with the free breakfast club running from 8.30 to 8.50. |
| 1b | OR End employment of supervisors and arrange volunteers.(but not in the kitchen) |
| 2 | Governing Body withdraw from the scheme AND either |
| 2a | Join the ‘Clwb Bore Bach’ care club which would include a breakfast. Free to FSM pupils with a ‘capped fee’ for families with more than two children of a maximum of £12.50 per week. |
| 2b | OR Schools arrange their own schemes, receiving a delegated .sum fron the authority in contribution |
| 3 | Run a care club between 8.00 and 8.30 at a fee of between 50-75p for all children per day, with a ‘capped fee’ for families with more than two children. Then a Free Breakfast Club to run from 8.30 to 8.50. Use current staff at existing terms. This allows parents to send their children to the free breakfast club by 8.30. |

The results of the Governing Body survey will inform the next steps of the Task and Finish group.

On the basis of the results of the parent and school governor surveys, final options will be presented to elected members to decide upon by October 2015.