

Article for NASBM – July 2014

Ensuring high pupil premium registration with UIFSM

Visit www.schoolfoodplan.com/www for case studies and tips from other schools

Initial paragraph:

The UIFSM policy should not mean lost Pupil Premium funding. Promoting UIFSM to encourage registration is also an opportunity for schools to identify children currently unaware of their entitlement to a free meal. A proactive approach taken by Brighton & Hove has so far resulted in an additional £45,500 of previously unclaimed pupil premium funding.

Main body

Many local authorities have plans in place to ensure high pupil premium registration alongside UIFSM. Brighton and Hove Council is a great example of one of the local authorities which views UIFSM as an opportunity to promote the school meal service. They encourage parents to register their child for a free lunch to capture relevant data for pupil premium funding.

Rather than writing to parents informing them of UIFSM and then again to encourage FSM registration, Brighton and Hove sent one letter to Reception and KS1 parents. They chose to give key messages about food quality, ask parents to express a preference for selecting a school lunch for their child, and try to identify and agree any special dietary requirements. Within the letter they also requested information to enable identification of pupil premium entitlement.

Susie Haworth, Brighton & Hove's School Meals Team Manager, believes a partnership approach provides the best outcomes for all. Plus, it maximises pupil premium eligibility registrations.

"I am promoting a strong partnership approach with schools and therefore letters have been printed by the LA. These are distributed to schools and schools collect forms to return to the LA for processing in batches. This means that schools can see how many responses they have had and can chase accordingly. As the forms are returned, my team collates the potential take up figures and share this with the caterer and schools. We then start the process of checking information for pupil premium."

Schools have supported parents to complete forms, and as a result of this partnership approach the local authority has already had a very good return rate. Early indications suggest that children will take advantage of a free school lunch. The most unexpected benefit has been identifying children who should have already been claiming free school meals. This has resulted in an additional £45,500 funding across the local authority.

To facilitate the Pupil Premium registration process in the future, Brighton & Hove will request guardian National Insurance Number and Date of Birth on the Pupil Registration Form.

Sharing What Works Well

As part of the School Food Plan, a new online hub for sharing What Works Well in creating a great school food culture has launched at, www.schoolfoodplan.com/www. The website contains inspiring case studies with practical advice and signposting to further advice and support.

In the local authority schools that have already introduced UFSM, schools have seen an increase in pupil premium registration. This has been as a result of planning and putting in place appropriate measures – including the introduction of school meal registration schemes for all pupils. Sample registration forms from UFSM local authorities can be viewed on [What Works Well](#).

Also available is the DfE published model registration form for schools and local authorities. DfE recommend that schools ask all parents and guardians, regardless of family income or circumstances, to complete the form when they enrol their child in the school. A model letter for parents, informing them of UFSM and the benefits of good food and a good food culture has also been created.

Visit the dedicated Pupil Premium and UFSM areas of the [What Works Well](#) to find out what other schools, local authorities and caterers are doing to prepare for universal infant free school meals. This will help you maximise pupil premium eligibility registrations.

