

School Principals  
Via email

Rathgael House  
43 Balloo Road  
Rathgill  
BANGOR  
BT19 7PR

22 November 2024

Dear Principal,

**LAUNCH OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE OPTIONS IN THE REVIEW OF FREE SCHOOL MEALS AND UNIFORM GRANT ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

I am writing to inform you that the Department of Education has today launched a public consultation on the options considered as part of the review of the eligibility criteria for free school meals and uniform grants.

This consultation examines the number of children and young people who could benefit from free school meals and uniform grants. The Department is therefore seeking the views of all stakeholders on how the funding for free school meals and uniform grant provision can be used to maximise the benefits to children and young people and their families.

I would encourage you to provide a response to the consultation and also ask that you encourage others involved in your school community to do so, including pupils, parents, staff and your Board of Governors.

The consultation documents that are available, that are targeted towards different groups to help inform responses, include:

- The full consultation document
- An easy read version aimed at older children
- A child friendly version aimed at younger children
- An Irish language version of the full consultation document (will be available shortly)

All of the consultation documents and online response form can be accessed on the Department of Education website at [www.education-ni.gov.uk/consultations/review-free-school-meals-and-uniform-grant-eligibility-criteria](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk/consultations/review-free-school-meals-and-uniform-grant-eligibility-criteria).

Alternatively, responses can be submitted via email or post to:

Email: [foodinschoolsteam@education-ni.gov.uk](mailto:foodinschoolsteam@education-ni.gov.uk)

Post: Food in Schools Team  
Department of Education  
Rathgael House  
43 Balloo Road  
Rathgill  
Bangor  
BT19 7PR

You can also request the documentation in alternative formats using these contact details.

The consultation period will close at 5pm on 14 February 2025. Please note that responses received after the closing date may not be able to be considered.

Free school meals and uniform grants are important to a large number of families across Northern Ireland in ensuring that their children are able to access a healthy school lunch each day and have help with the costs of school uniforms. I would therefore ask for your support in both providing and encouraging responses from those within your school community in order that the Minister can take account of a wide range of views in making his decisions on the way forward in this area.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Margaret Rose McNaughton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M'.

**MARGARET ROSE McNAUGHTON**  
**Director of Transport and Food in Schools**