



FREE SCHOOL MEAL GUIDANCE

INTRODUCTION

Free School Meals are a statutory benefit.

You are entitled to Free School Meals for your children if you receive one of the following;

- Income Support
- Income based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income Related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you aren't also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run on – paid for 4 weeks only after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit

Children who get any of the above benefits in their own right (i.e. they get benefit payments directly, instead of through a parent or guardian) can also get free school meals.

You will not be entitled to free school meals if you or your partner receives Working Tax Credit. However from the 1st May 2009 a parent is entitled to working tax credit run on during the first four week period immediately after their employment ceases, or after they start to work less than 16 hours a week.

HOW TO APPLY

You can obtain a Free School Meal Application Form by;

- Downloading a form from our school website
- Visiting our main reception and asking for a form
- Your child can ask for a form on your behalf

The form must be filled in by the person who receives the qualifying benefit and must be accompanied by proof of entitlement.

The following are qualifying benefits;

Income Support

- Income support notification letter received within the last 3 months
- A Written statement from the Job Centre Plus confirming entitlement.

Job Seekers Allowance (Income based ONLY)

There are 2 types of Job Seekers Allowance – only parents in receipt of income based jobseekers allowance are entitled to free school meals.

- All pages of your jobseekers allowance award letter received within the last 3 months.
- A written statement from Job Centre Plus confirming that you are in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance (income- based).

State Pension Credit (Guaranteed Credit)

- Your pension Credit Notification Letter (M1000)
- A written statement from The Pension Service confirming your entitlement to State Pension Credit

Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) income related ONLY

- All pages of your ESA award notice letter- no more than 3 months old
- A written statement from the DWP confirming entitlement to ESA income related only.

Child Tax Credit

- All pages of your latest award notice letter (TC602) confirming no working tax credits are being received and with an annual income below £16,190.

Universal Credit

- All pages on your latest award notice letter confirming your entitlement to Universal Credit

Support under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

- We will need to see a recent letter from UK Border Agency confirming the claimant is entitled to support. The claimant will not have a NI Number but a 9 digit NASS number.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q; How often do I have to apply?

You should apply when you first require free school meals. Your eligibility will then automatically be checked in the autumn (Dec) and summer (Apr) term – and an annual review will be carried out every August in preparation for the new academic year.

Q; from what date would Free School Meals be awarded?

Free school meals can only be awarded from the date the application form is received and approved.

Q; How are the catering staff aware my child gets a free school meal?

Your child's school passport will be pre-stamped at the start of every new term with a free school meal pass. They simply show the lunchtime supervisors who will date stamp the passport enabling you to also see they are eating a lunch every day.

Q; I receive Working Tax Credit – am I entitled to Free School Meals?

No. However if you qualify for the Working Tax Credit Run on you will be entitled for the first 4 weeks only.

Q; What if my circumstances change?

You must notify our Free School Meals Administrator- Mrs Mullen as soon as possible to tell us of any changes for example;

- You start work or come off benefit
- Any changes to your current benefit
- If you change address
- If your child moves address and is no longer living with you

Annual reviews

The Free School Administrator will write to all parents in receipt of Free School meals 2 weeks before their current evidence runs out, requesting updated evidence of entitlement. If no response is received by the deadline date, it will be assumed that you are no longer eligible and your child will be expected to pay for their meals.