



Free School Meals (Guidance)

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY BEFORE COMPLETING THE FORM

The application form must be completed by the person who receives the qualifying benefit and details the eligibility criteria. You must complete all your personal details with care including legal name, National Insurance Number and date of birth, and ensure that you sign the declaration on the reverse of the form agreeing for us to check your entitlement if needed. All the information you provide will be treated in strict confidence.

Changes to free school meal eligibility under Universal Credit

The eligibility criteria for free school meals have been changed. This guidance explains the changes and how they might affect you.

I don't currently claim free school meals – what does this mean for me?

If you think you might be eligible for free school meals, submit a completed application form and the information you provide will be used to check if you are in receipt of a qualifying benefit and, if you are on Universal Credit, that your earnings do not exceed the threshold. If you claim Universal Credit, your earnings will be assessed from up to three of your last Universal Credit assessment periods. When we have assessed your application you will receive a letter confirming whether your child is entitled to Free School Meals, we will let you know from what date these will start

I am currently claiming free school meals – what does this mean for me?

Most people won't be affected by the new criteria. If you're currently claiming free school meals, but don't meet the new criteria, your child will continue to receive free school meals until the end of the Universal Credit rollout period. This will apply even if your earnings rise above the new threshold or if you stop being entitled to Universal Credit. The rollout period is currently scheduled to end in March 2022.

Once Universal Credit is fully rolled out, your child will keep their free school meal until the end of their current phase of education, ie primary or secondary.

What you can expect from a free school meal?

Choice

- To encourage healthy eating, we will be asking students in receipt of free school meals to have a full square meal during the lunch break, in preference to snacks or cakes at morning break.
- Our catering provider Cucina has agreed that these students will be allowed to receive:

Main Meal and Dessert or Main Meal and Drink

- These options will not be limited by the cost and water is available at all times.

Payment

Students in receipt of free school meals do not have to pay for their meal, however after they have made their choice, they need to go to the canteen till, and provide their full name. Please note, free school meals can only be used once, so ensure all options have been selected.

And finally.....

- *If your child is entitled to free school meals but you are reluctant to take advantage of this entitlement, talk to us about your concerns. We will try to put your mind at rest.*
- *If you still decide not to take the free school meals, we still encourage you to apply. You don't have to accept the free school meals but you will show on our records as being entitled. The more children who are shown as being entitled to free school meals the more funding the school will receive. This ultimately benefits your children.*