



## Am I eligible for free school meals?

You will be able to claim free school meals for your child if you receive one of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit (provided you have a net income from employment of no more than £7400 per year). For more information on how the government calculates your earnings from employment whilst claiming Universal Credit, please see the "Eligibility under Universal Credit" section below.
- Income Support
- Income based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guarantee element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit

### **Eligibility under Universal Credit**

To be eligible for free school meals, a Universal Credit recipient must have earnings from employment which do not exceed £7400 per year. Whether you exceed the £7400 per year threshold is determined by looking at any earnings from employment reported on your most recent Universal Credit statements. Firstly, the last complete Universal Credit assessment period is reviewed for income from employment in excess of £616.67 (one twelfth of the £7400 threshold).

If income from employment in the most recent Universal Credit period is less than £616.67, an applicant is eligible for free school meals. If it exceeds £616.67, then combined income from employment in the last two and then the last three assessment periods are considered (assuming Universal Credit has been received for longer than one complete period). The full income from employment thresholds are:

- £616.67 in the last assessment period (one twelfth of the £7400 threshold). If income is less than this amount in the most recent assessment period, an applicant is eligible for free school meals. If income exceeds this amount then:
- £1233.34 in the last two assessment periods (one sixth of the £7400 threshold). If the combined income is less than this amount in the two most recent assessment periods, an applicant is eligible for free school meals. If income exceeds this amount then:
- £1850 in the last three assessment periods (one quarter of the £7400 threshold). If the combined income is less than this in the three most recent assessment periods,

an applicant is eligible for free school meals. If income exceeds this amount then an applicant is not currently eligible.

Universal Credit recipients can determine the amount of income from employment recorded on their claim by referring to the deductions section of their Universal Credit statements. An "earnings reported by your employer" amount will be recorded if appropriate.

### **Universal Infant Free School Meals**

All children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 receive free school meals under the government's Universal Infant Free School Meals scheme. Your child's school will provide more information on this scheme and details on how to access free meals for your child.

We strongly encourage all parents who believe they also meet the benefit related free school meals criteria to complete one of our application forms, even if you already access free meals under the Universal scheme. If you meet the benefit related criteria, your school will also benefit from additional funding known as Pupil Premium.

### **Eligibility during COVID-19 pandemic**

#### **Existing free school meal applicants**

If you have children who are entitled to receive free school meals on benefit related grounds, their school will continue to make sure they have access to meals during the pandemic. Children who have now returned to school may have their meals provided in school. Or for those who have not yet returned to school, either supermarket vouchers will be provided or other arrangements put in place e.g. food parcels. Your child's school will provide further information.

Provision will also be extended to cover the summer holidays.

#### **New free school meal applicants**

If you wish to make a new claim for free school meals, you may do so via your child's school or our [free school meals online application form](#).

Anyone who is deemed eligible for free school meals will receive the provision outlined above. Provision will continue during the summer holidays, but only if you become eligible before your child's school has formalised it's school food arrangements for the summer break. Your child's school can provide further information.

## **Universal infant free school meal recipients**

Children in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2 who receive a universal infant free school meal will not receive continued provision unless they also qualify on benefit related grounds.

## **Temporary extension of free school meal eligibility to groups who have no recourse to public funds**

The government have temporarily extended free school meal eligibility to the groups listed below. Eligibility under these categories will only remain in place until schools re-open. If you believe you meet one of these criteria, please email us on [fsm.admin@slough.gov.uk](mailto:fsm.admin@slough.gov.uk) or contact your child's school.

- children of Zambrano carers
- children of families with no recourse to public funds with a right to remain in the UK on grounds of private and family life under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights
- children of families receiving support under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 who are also subject to a no recourse to public funds restriction
- children of a subset of failed asylum seekers supported under Section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

## **How do I apply for free school meals?**

If you think you qualify for free school meals you can apply either by:

- completing our [online free school meal application form](#)
- contacting your child's school

To use our online form you must supply an e-mail address so we can inform you of the result of your application. If you don't have an e-mail address or would prefer to complete a paper application form, please apply through your child's school.

Please make sure you have the following information ready before making an application:

- Your National Insurance number, or if you are an Asylum Seeker your National Asylum Support Service number (NASS)
- Your personal information including your date of birth and full legal name
- Your child's name and school
- Details of the benefits you currently receive

## **What happens when I apply?**

Upon receipt, your application is assessed against data held by the government. The information they hold will confirm whether or not you are claiming one of the qualifying benefits and if applicable, whether you also meet the household income

threshold. Once your application has been processed, both you and your child's school will be e-mailed with the result. Please read the information contained within the result e-mail very carefully. If you are eligible for free school meals, your child's school will contact you regarding the free school meal provision they offer.

### **Protection of free school meal eligibility**

If your child is or becomes eligible for free school meals on benefit related grounds, they'll remain eligible until they finish the phase of schooling (primary or secondary) they're in on 31 March 2023 even if your circumstances change. This protection has been introduced whilst the government completes its rollout of Universal Credit nationally.

### **What is Pupil Premium?**

Pupil Premium is a sum of money the government gives to schools each year to help them improve the attainment of disadvantaged children. The amount each school gets is determined by the number of pupils at school who:

- have been eligible for free school meals at some point in the last 6 years
- are looked after by the local authority
- are no longer looked after by a local authority because they have been adopted, had a special guardianship order, a child arrangements order or a residence order

For each child who has been eligible for free school meals at some point in the last 6 years, primary schools receive £1320 and secondary schools receive £935.

[https://slough-self.achieveservice.com/service/Free\\_school\\_meals](https://slough-self.achieveservice.com/service/Free_school_meals).