



May 2018

Dear Parent/Carer,

Changes to free school meal eligibility – Introduction to Universal Credit

The criteria used to determine which students are eligible for free school meals has been updated to reflect the introduction of Universal Credit and the phasing out of other income-based benefits. The information below explains the changes to eligibility and how the changes could affect parents/carers.

Who is eligible for free school meals?

Free school meals are available to students in receipt of, or whose parents are in receipt of, one or more of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit, provided they have an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400, as assessed by earnings from up to three of your most recent assessment periods.
- Income Support.
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance.
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance.
- Support under Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
- The guarantee element of Pension Credit.
- Child Tax Credit, provided they are not 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 four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit.

Currently receiving free school meals?

If your child is currently receiving free school meals but you do not meet the new criteria, they will be protected against losing their free school meals as follows:

- From 1 April 2018, all existing free school meals claimants will continue to receive free school meals whilst Universal Credit is rolled out. This will apply even if their earnings rise above the new threshold during that time.
- In addition, any child gaining eligibility for free school meals after 1 April 2018 will be protected against losing free school meals during the Universal Credit rollout period.
- Once Universal Credit is fully rolled out, any existing claimants that no longer meet the eligibility criteria at that point (because they are earning above the threshold or are no longer a recipient of Universal Credit) will continue to receive free school meals until the end of their current phase of education (i.e. primary or secondary). **The Universal Credit rollout is currently expected to be completed in March 2022.**

If you think that you might be eligible for free school meals, please complete the enclosed form and return it to the main reception, marked for the attention of Mrs A. Armin, Office Manager. For this application you will not need to supply proof of your eligibility, as you give us permission to check the council's and the Department for Education's records on your behalf.

A student is only eligible to receive a free school meal when a claim for the meal has been made on their behalf, and their eligibility has been verified by the school where they are enrolled or by the local authority. The school will be notified of all eligible claims and your son/daughter will receive free school meals the following day.

Please contact Mrs A. Armin, Office Manager for any further information.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'N. Harrison', written in a cursive style.

Mr N. Harrison
Headteacher



FSM ENTITLEMENT VERIFICATION CHECK

SCHOOL/ACADEMY: St Bede’s Catholic School & Sixth Form College

NAME OF PUPIL(s):

YEAR GROUP

.....

SURNAME OF PARENT/CARER WHO IS IN RECEIPT OF AN ELIGIBLE BENEFIT

.....

NATIONAL INSURANCE NUMBER OF PARENT/CARER WHO IS IN RECEIPT OF AN ELIGIBLE BENEFIT

OR

ASYLUM SEEKER’S REFERENCE 9 DIGIT NUMBER

DATE OF BIRTH OF PARENT/CARER

PLEASE TICK WHICH BENEFIT YOU ARE CLAIMING

- Universal Credit with an earnings threshold that does not exceed £7,400
- Income Support
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit, provided you **are not** entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income, as assessed by HMRC that does not exceed £16,190
- Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit
- Where a parent is entitled to Working Tax Credit run-on (the payment someone receives for a further four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit).
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

I hereby give consent to a check for Free School Meals eligibility, via Durham County Council’s Benefit Systems and the Department for Education’s online service which includes data from HMRC and DWP. (Communication with Durham County Council may be subject to monitoring and recording.) I understand that it is my responsibility to inform the school if I no longer receive the relevant benefit.

PARENT/CARER’S SIGNATURE:

DATE:

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO THE SCHOOL THAT YOUR CHILD ATTENDS

HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT ENTITLEMENT

Please note a separate application must be made to the School Transport section

A national policy provides extended rights to pupils eligible for free school meals or whose parents receive their maximum level of Working Tax Credit. This provides transport for:

Primary pupils aged 8 but under age 11 years:

- The nearest suitable school, where that school is more than 2 miles away from the child's home.

Secondary pupils:

- 1 of the 3 nearest qualifying secondary schools, where the school is more than 2 but less than 6 miles from the child's home, and
- the nearest suitable school preferred because of religion or belief for pupils whose parent(s) adhere to that particular faith, where that school is more than 2 but less than 15 miles from the child's home.

For further information, please visit <http://www.durham.gov.uk/schooltransport>

For School/Academy Use Only

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