

What is Free School Meals?

Free school meals are available to children whose parents qualify by meeting the criteria listed. Children must be in school all day and they will be provided with a meal at lunchtime that is paid for by the school.

Children in pre-school/nursery do not qualify for a free meal until they start school. Applications received for children that have not yet started school will be processed so that when your child starts school, you will already be notified if they qualify for a free school meal or not.

How do I qualify?

Parents/carers who receive any of the following are entitled to free school meals:

- Income Support
- Employment & Support Allowance (Income Related) - not Contribution related
- Income-based Job Seekers Allowance - not Contribution based
- Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit.
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit, providing you do not also receive Working Tax Credit, with an annual taxable income (as assessed by HMRC) of less than £16,190.

If you have recently become unemployed, but are still receiving Working Tax Credits, you may be entitled to free school meals.

Please call us on 0845 345 9122 for advice.

How do I apply?

1. Please complete the form overleaf.
2. Take the completed form to your child's school or send it to:
Entitlements Team,
County Hall,
Taunton, TA1 4DY

Or apply online at

www.somerset.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals

You do not need to send evidence with this application. If we need evidence at a later date we will contact you. Applications will be processed within 5-10 working days of receipt and if the application is successful, free school meals will be awarded from the date the application is processed. Free school meals will not be backdated. When completing an application, please ensure all the details are filled in correctly, otherwise this will delay the time it takes to process your application.

While the majority of schools in Somerset use this service, a small number do not. Therefore, a small number of parents will need to follow a different process to apply for free school meals. Please check www.somerset.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals for further information.

Pupil Premium

If you are awarded free school meals, the school that your child attends will also be allocated money called Pupil Premium. This money is then used to support the pupils at the school. For further details on this, please speak to your school.

IMPORTANT

You no longer need to reapply for the same child(ren) as long as you remain eligible; once we have your details on record we will do regular checks to see whether you are still entitled. In order to perform these checks we need up to date details. Therefore, you must let us know of any changes of benefit, name or address of the person in your household receiving the qualifying benefit. Incorrect details may lead us to believe that you are no longer entitled to free school meals. You will need to submit a new application for any children you haven't previously applied for.

Universal Infant Free School Meals

From September 2014, all children in reception, year 1 and year 2 in schools in England will be entitled to receive universal infant free school meals. If you meet the criteria to qualify for free school meals it is important for you to complete this application form so your school will receive pupil premium. To receive the universal infant free school meals, please speak to your school in the first instance.