

Free school meals

Notes of guidance and
application form



Free school meals

Notes of guidance - Please keep these notes for reference

Legal Background

Free School Meals are administered by the Local Authority and the qualifying rules are decided by Central Government.

Do you Qualify?

Parents or guardians receiving the following benefits can use this form to claim Free School Meals.

- Income Support
- Jobseekers Allowance (Income Based)
- Income Related Employment & Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit with an annual taxable income of less than £16,040
- Pension Guarantee Credit

You will not normally be eligible for Free School Meals if you receive any amount of Working Tax Credit.

However, if you have recently become unemployed you may be entitled to a short term 4 week award while your entitlement to Child Tax Credit is assessed. If you wish to apply on this basis, you will need to enclose a copy of your Tax Credits Decision Notice with your application. This can be obtained from the HM Revenue & Customs helpline **0845 300 3900**.

Free School Meals can only be given on the basis of a completed and approved application and cannot be backdated.

If your benefit ceases, your annual taxable income increases to over £16,040 or you are awarded Working Tax Credit, your child does not then qualify for free meals and you must let Education Transport and Awards

know immediately. You will be required to repay the money to the school for meals taken if you continue to claim them when your child is no longer entitled.

School Transport Information

If you are eligible for free school meals you may also be entitled to school transport. Transport assistance can be provided if your child is attending one of the nearest three secondary schools providing they are between 2 and 6 miles from your home address by the shortest available route.

For more information or an application form please contact **0845 603 2200**.

Application Process

When an application has been agreed we will send a letter to the parent or guardian and notify the school.

Applications have to be renewed every academic year. If you have provided your Name, National Insurance Number and Date of Birth, we will check your eligibility against central benefit records. If we are unable to obtain confirmation of your continued eligibility, or we do not have your National Insurance Number or Date of Birth details then we will write to remind you to re-submit your income benefit evidence.

Personal Visits

If you wish to make a personal visit, please contact us beforehand to make an appointment. Appointments can be fixed very quickly and easily by telephoning the number given on the back of this form.

Continued on the inside back cover ►►

Free school meals application

For use from 1st November 2009.

Please complete and detach this form and return to the address on page 3.

Family Reference:

* Parent Name:

SECTION 1 PUPIL AND PARENT DETAILS

Pupil Details

Please name all dependent children (under 17 years old) who you wish to claim for, who are not receiving benefits in their own right:

| Surname | First Name | Date of Birth | | | School Name |
|---------|------------|---------------|---|---|-------------|
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Have your dependent children previously received Free School Meals?

Yes No

Please state reference number if you know it:

Parent Details

Surname

First Name(s)

Preferred title (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms)

Relationship to pupil(s)

Your National Insurance Number or National Asylum Seekers Reference Number

| | | | | | | | | | |
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| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|

Your Date of birth

Day Month Year

Address:

| |
|----------------------|
| <input type="text"/> |
| <input type="text"/> |

Postcode

Telephone number where you can be contacted during the day:

Which Authority is your Council Tax payable to? (e.g. Braintree District Council)
Please answer even if you do not pay council tax

Do you currently receive free school transport?

Yes No

SECTION 2 - FINANCIAL DETAILS

To be eligible for Free School Meals you must receive one of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Jobseekers Allowance
(evidence **MUST** clearly state **Income Based**)
- Income Related Employment & Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit, not Working Tax Credit, with an annual income not exceeding £16,040
- Pension Guarantee Credit
- Employment and Support Allowance
(evidence **MUST** clearly state **Income Based**)
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

If you have completed your National Insurance Number and Date of Birth information in Section 1, we will check your eligibility direct with the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) on your behalf. You may be required to submit additional evidence of receipt of benefits. We will write to you to request this if necessary.

Please note that if you have recently become unemployed, we cannot check your interim Tax Credit Decision Notice using this service. You must enclose a copy of this document with your application.

SECTION 3 - DECLARATION

Declaration by Parent/Guardian

I confirm that the information given is correct. I agree to notify Essex County Council – Education Transport and Awards immediately if my child should fail for any reason to attend the school for any reason, for any part of the term covered by the award, or if my benefit ceases. I understand that Essex County Council may use the information provided on this form for the detection and prevention of fraud. I confirm that I am responsible for the child(ren) named on this form and that he/she lives/they live with me.

I agree that you can use the information I have provided to process my claim for free school lunches and will contact other sources as allowed by law to verify my initial, and ongoing entitlement.

I understand that the results of any free school lunch eligibility check may also be used to assess my entitlement to school transport (if applicable).

I understand that my application will need to be renewed at the end of the academic year and I agree to provide new evidence of benefit entitlement if I am requested to do so.

I will inform you if I change my address.

Signed

Date

SCHOOL USE ONLY

(Evidence of benefit must be enclosed with this form)

Form and Evidence seen on:

Date

Name

Signature

School Stamp

When you have completed this form, please pull out and return to:

**Education Transport & Awards
PO Box 4261
Chelmsford
CM1 1GS**

Evidence of Income – if you are sending in paper evidence, only the following documents can be used to support your claim. Please do not send originals:

1. Letter - Department of Work and Pensions

A **photocopy** of a letter from the Department of Work and Pensions dated less than 6 weeks old and showing:

- (a) The name and address details of the person receiving benefit
- (b) The name of the benefit
(If Employment and Support Allowance is being claimed, the evidence must state **'Income Related'** as well. If Jobseekers Allowance is being claimed evidence must state 'Jobseekers Allowance – **income based'**).

2. Letter - HM Revenue and Customs

A photocopy of your TC602 award letter (all pages) from HM Revenue and Customs dated within the current tax year showing:

- (a) Income below £16,040 without any Working Tax Credit showing or being currently received
- (b) The name and address details of the person receiving benefit

3. Letter - Pensions Service

A photocopy of your Award Notice from the Pensions Service showing:

- (a) The name and address details of the person receiving benefit
- (b) The 'How pension credit has been worked out...' section showing details of Pension Guarantee Credit payment.

4. Immigration and Nationality Directorate Documentation

A copy of the Application registration card or Form SAL1 or Form SAL2 showing:

- (a) The name and date of birth of the person the document relates to
- (b) The date of issue or date of application for asylum

The following benefits ARE NOT sufficient evidence and WILL NOT qualify you for Free School Meals: Working Tax Credit, Jobseekers Allowance (Contribution Based), Employment and Support Allowance (Contribution Based), Disability Allowance, Incapacity Benefit, Child Benefit, or Housing Benefit.

Please note we do not accept bank statements.

For more information please contact:

By Post:

Education Transport & Awards
PO Box 4261
Chelmsford
CM1 1GS

By Telephone:

0845 603 2200

By Email:

educationawards@essex.gov.uk

Website:

www.essex.gov.uk/educationawards

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