

Free School Meals

Do I qualify to claim free school meals?

Families of children and young people in full-time education at any school maintained by Leicestershire County Council may be entitled to claim free school meals, providing they receive a qualifying benefit.

Qualifying benefits

The current criteria for claiming free school meals are as follows:

- Income Support (IS)
- Employment and Support Allowance (Income Based)
- Child Tax Credit, provided the annual taxable income, as assessed by the Inland Revenue is not in excess of £16,190. Families who also receive an award of Working Tax Credit **do not** qualify to claim for free school meals
- The Guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Children who receive Income Support (IS) or Income Based Jobseekers Allowance in their own right are also entitled to receive free school meals

Temporary qualification for free school meals

From 1st May 2009 where a parent has been entitled to Working Tax Credit during the four-week period immediately after their employment ceases, or after they start to work less than 16 hours per week, they will be eligible to claim free school meals over that period.

Claimants MUST complete a hard copy application form and send it to us with a copy of their Tax Credit Decision Notice, which will be issued immediately by HMRC to a claimant who has notified them that they have stopped working. Applications will not be accepted without this document and free school meals authorisation will not be granted prior to the date of application, or extended beyond the end date shown on the Tax Credit Decision Notice. In order to qualify for free school meals after that date the claimant will need to be in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits listed in the previous section, and evidence of this provided.

No other benefits qualify for free school meals

How do I apply?

- E-mail us on freeschoolmeals@leics.gov.uk
- You can download the [Free School Meals Application Form](#) (Word doc, 245kb)
- Request an application form on 0116 3056588 or 0116 3057093
- Apply via telephone on 0116 3056588 or 0116 3057093
- Fax us on 0116 3055785

Our postal address is:

School Food Support Service
Free School Meals
Unit 14, The Courtyard
Whitwick Business Park
Stenson Road
Coaville, LE67 4JP

Tel: 0116 305 6588

Applications will also be available at the following service shops □ **County Hall, Market Harborough, Hinckley, Braunstone and Loughborough.**

How often do I need to apply?

You only need to apply for free school meals once, your eligibility will then be checked on a 4 weekly basis via the central benefit records database. If after this check of eligibility it is found that you are no longer eligible we will write to you requesting to see proof of the benefits you are receiving, types of benefit proof accepted are detailed below.

Entitlement to free school meals will not be backdated to cover unpaid dinner money or to refund dinner money paid prior to the date of eligibility validation.

Benefit Proof Accepted

- Recent documentary proof of being in receipt of Income Support (IS), Income Based Job Seekers Allowance (IBJSA) or Employment and Support Allowance □ Income Based (ESA IR) from the Department for Work and Pensions.
- For those in receipt of Child Tax Credit, most recent Tax Credit Award Notice - Form TC602 from the Inland Revenue
- Recent proof of receiving the Guarantee element of M1000 Pension Credit Award
- Recent proof of NASS letter or IS 96 (if claiming under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999)
- Proof of a Tax Credit Decision Notice (*only to be sent if applying for Temporary authorisation*)

If you have further queries or wish to discuss your eligibility, please contact free school meals on: 0116 3056588 or 0116 3057093.