

Winhills Primary Academy

Part of The Diamond Learning Partnership Trust

Established in the Queen's Jubilee Year 2012

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Executive Headteacher: Mrs Susannah Connell BSc MA (Ed Mgt) NPQH

6th September 2023

Dear Parents or Carers,

Re: Benefit Related Free School Meal Eligibility

As you may be aware, if you are in receipt of some benefits your children may be entitled to free school meals (see attached criteria).

Up until the end of Key Stage 1 (end of Year 2), all pupils can have a meal at school for free, but from Year 3 onwards, only those pupils eligible for free school meals will automatically receive a meal. There is a cost for all other pupils.

Pupils in receipt of free school meals attract additional funding for school, which allows us to spend more on resources and other ways to support your child's education. Also, there has been a voucher scheme running to provide supermarket vouchers in holidays for pupils entitled to free school meals.

If your child has moved into Year 3 and you receive benefits, please complete the online application.

Siblings are not automatically entitled to free school meals, if you have a child who has started in Early Years, you will need to make a separate application for them.

If you need support with the application, please speak to the school office.

Applications can be completed online at

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals

Thank you for your continued support,



Mrs Harradine

Headteacher

On behalf of Winhills Primary Academy (Part of The DLPT)

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Free School Meals Explained

How do you know if I am eligible?

We check for eligibility securely via the Government's benefits database. To do this we must have your surname, date of birth and your National Insurance number (or National Asylum Seeker reference number if applicable). This check only indicates whether you are eligible for Free School Meals – no other information is revealed.

What evidence of benefits should I send with my application?

You do not need to send us evidence of benefits at the time you apply. If the check indicates that you are not eligible, we will invite you to send us proof of benefits. We will let you know what we need to see.

How often will I need to apply for Free School Meals?

Once you have applied for Free School Meals there is no need to reapply for that particular child (whether you initially pass or fail our checks) even in the following circumstances:

- When your child moves into the next year group
- When your child moves from Primary to Secondary school
- When your child moves schools within Cambridgeshire

However, you are required to make a new application for any younger siblings as they start school.

How long will Free School Meals last?

Children who were entitled to Free School Meals on 1 April 2018 or who become entitled after this date will remain entitled to Free School Meals until the end of the phase of education (primary or secondary school) that they are in on 31 March 2022 *even if your circumstances change*. Therefore, if you stop receiving any of the qualifying benefits or your household income increases your entitlement to Free School Meals will remain unaffected.

If I am in receipt of Working Tax Credit (WTC) can I claim Free School Meals?

Families who are receiving Working Tax Credit are not entitled to Free School Meals, regardless of their income. Your Tax Credit Award Notice will state whether you are receiving WTC. You need to be receiving Child Tax Credit only with a household income less than £16,190 to be entitled to Free School Meals on the basis of Tax Credits.

However, please note that if you are receiving WTC run-on (paid for 4 weeks only after you end employment or start to work less than 16 hours per week) and your household income is less than £16,190 your children should be entitled to Free School Meals.

Can I claim for more than one child on one application form?

Yes, you can apply for all your children on one application and we encourage you to do so as we can only award Free School Meals to children who have been named on an application – we cannot automatically add siblings.

How will I know if my application has been successful or unsuccessful?

Whatever the outcome of your application, we will write to you to let you know. If your application is successful we will also contact your child's school directly to confirm your children's entitlement and the date that this commences. Those who apply online will also receive an email confirmation acknowledging receipt of application.

How are Free School Meals paid for?

No money exchanges hands between the Council and the applicant. This is all done on your behalf behind the scenes.

I am worried my child will be identified as being on Free School Meals – can you tell me the process?

Schools are informed which pupils are entitled to Free School Meals via a secure system and information is kept confidential. Many schools within Cambridgeshire now operate cashless payment systems making it impossible for Free School Meal children to be identified amongst their peers (please contact your local school for confirmation on how they operate the scheme).

If all Key Stage 1 children will be eligible for Universal Infant Free School Meals (UiFSMs) do I still need to apply?

Yes – we highly recommend that you submit an application as if you are entitled to Free School Meals due to low income, your child's school receives additional funding (called 'Pupil Premium') which will go towards supporting their development and can help with things like the cost of school trips (at the schools discretion).

Can I still choose to provide a packed lunch? What if I do not want my child to have a Free School Meal every day?

Parents are welcome to provide packed lunches or additional food items for their child and can opt to utilise the Free School Meal provision on days which they require.

What if my child has special dietary needs or is a fussy eater?

Schools offer a wide range of menu choices and are confident there will be something that your child will eat and enjoy. Further information on school menus is available on each schools website or from the school office.

Secondary School Clothing Allowance

This scheme ended on 31 March 2014. Please contact your school directly to find out if they are part of a local scheme.

Information for Parents/Carers whose children are starting Year 3

My child has been receiving universal school meals during their Key Stage One, do I need to apply for Free School Meals (FSM) now they are moving into Year 3?

In order for your child to receive free school meals for Year 3 and beyond, you will need to meet the qualifying economic criteria (as shown below) and submit an application at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals

My child was in receipt of Pupil Premium, do I need to reapply for this to continue?

If your child was previously receiving Pupil Premium on the basis of your household income, their entitlement will continue / be transferred to their new Cambridgeshire school.

What is the criteria for Free School Meals / Pupil Premium?

The economic criteria are:

- ◆ Income Support
- ◆ Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- ◆ Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- ◆ Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- ◆ The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- ◆ Child Tax Credit (unless you're also entitled to Working Tax Credit, and earn no more than £16,190)
- ◆ Working Tax Credit run-on (paid for 4 weeks after you stop receiving Working Tax Credit)
- ◆ Universal Credit (provided you have an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400)

My child has not previously been entitled to Free Schools Meals / Pupil Premium, shall I apply now?

You do not need to re-apply if you have previously provided your surname, date of birth and NI number or NASS number, as we already hold your details and will advise you if your child becomes eligible. We routinely check all applicants using a secure Electronic Checking System (ECS). You will be notified if your child does become entitled.

If you have recently changed your name and/or address, please contact the EWB Team to update their records so any future checks for entitlement are carried out using the most up to date information that HMRC hold for you.

If you have not previously provided your details to the EWB Team, then you will need to apply by completing an online form www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals

If you are unable to access the online form, a paper application will be available from your child's school.

Even if you don't think you would qualify at this point, once you have completed the form, we will be able to continue to check eligibility throughout your child's school years using the ECS. You will be notified if you become eligible.

Can my child be entitled to Pupil Premium for other reasons?

Your child may be entitled to Pupil Premium if they meet one of the criteria below, please discuss with your school:

- ◆ been in local-authority care for 1 day or more in England or Wales
- ◆ been adopted from care in England or Wales
- ◆ left care under a special guardianship order or residence order in England or Wales
- ◆ child from service family

If your child has recently changed school, you will need to ensure the new school is aware of this entitlement.

If you have any queries regarding this information, please call the Education Welfare Benefits team on 01223 703200 or email ewb.fsm@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Or look at the website www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals