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# Frequently asked questions about Free School Meals (FSM)

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These Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) provide information about Free School Meals (FSM) for parents.

For general information about FSM, see the Hampshire website: [Free school meals](#) | [Education and learning](#) | [Hampshire County Council](#)

## Q: Who can get Free School Meals?

### A: Children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2

All children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 automatically receive Free School Meals. It is still important that you register your child for Free School Meals if you are getting certain benefits (see list below) as it means your child's school will receive extra money (Pupil Premium) to spend on things like:

- Teaching and learning
- Extra support staff
- Trips
- After-school activities
- Breakfast and homework clubs
- Support for parents

### A: Children from Year 3 to Year 11

Your child will be entitled to Free School Meals if you receive **one** of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Job Seekers' Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (not Contribution Based)
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit, provided you are **not** also entitled to Working Tax Credit *and* have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190



- Parents who are made redundant or start working fewer than 16 hours per week may find their children are entitled to free meals for a limited period.
- Working Tax Credit Run-On (paid for 4 weeks after you stop receiving Working Tax Credit)

You will need to provide the following information:

- Name, home address and email address
- National Insurance Number or National Asylum Support Service (NASS) Number
- Child's name, date of birth and school they are attending.

### **A: College Students (Year 12 and Year 13)**

Students who are between 16 and 18 years old and enrolled in further education can apply for *Further Education Free Meals*.

Students must be receiving, or have parents who are receiving, one or more of the benefits listed above.

### **Q: How do I register for Free School Meals?**

A: Go to [Free school meals | Education and learning | Hampshire County Council](#) and choose the button that best describes the age of your child.

- On the next page, click on the link '*check to see if you are eligible for free meals*' to fill in the online application form.
- If you do not have access to a computer, your child's school will be able to give you a paper application form. Fill this in and return it to the school.
- If you need help to fill in the form, your child's school or EMTAS Assistant will be able to help you.

### **Q: When and how will I know whether my application has been successful?**

A: If you apply using a paper form, you will be notified by email, post or phone once your application has been processed. You will be able to say on the form whether you prefer to be contacted by email, post or phone.

If you apply online, you will know the outcome instantly.



**Q: Will I need to reapply every year?**

A: Yes, you will need to reapply at the end of each academic year for your child to continue receiving Free School Meals.

**Q: Who will know that my child receives Free School Meals?**

A: Only you and your child's school will know.

**Q: What are the benefits of my child having a Free School Meal?**

A: There are many benefits:

- You will save both money and time.
- Research shows that children who eat a healthy, nutritious lunch are able to concentrate and learn more successfully in the afternoon.
- Sitting down for a lunch time meal helps children learn about social interaction and encourages them to try new foods.
- Your child's school will receive additional funding (Pupil Premium)

**Q: Will my child get a balanced diet?**

A: Yes, the two course menu must meet the government's school food standards and so healthy meals will be available every day.

**Q: How will I know what is on the menu?**

A: Check your child's school website to see what the school meal will be each day.

**Q: My child is not allowed to eat certain foods because of his/her health or religion. How can I make sure they will receive the right food?**

A: Talk to your child's school to discuss his/her requirements. Schools provide special diets for pupils with allergies. For children who do not eat certain meats for religious reasons, the vegetarian alternative is always available.



**Q: What happens when my child goes on a school trip?**

A: Your child will be given a nutritious, packed lunch instead of a school meal.

**Q: I am really struggling but do not qualify for any of the benefits on the list. What can I do?**

A: Talk to your child's school. There may be a free breakfast club or they may provide free fruit at break time. There may also be a food bank near you; your child's school should be able to tell you about this too.