

Is your Child Entitled to Free School Meals and additional support in school?

Free school meals are a means-tested benefit which provides students with meals at school for free. Unfortunately, some parents who are eligible to claim free school meals for their children are not claiming this entitlement. We want to make sure that everyone who is eligible is using this benefit.

The Benefits of Free School Meals

- children can benefit from a healthy free nutritious meal
- families entitled to free school meals could save more than £400 per child per year by claiming free school meals
- it's anonymous for parents (because so much of the application process can be done online, a person's entitlement is mostly processed electronically)
- it's anonymous for young people (thanks to our cashless catering system, claiming free school meals is anonymous – Students records are updated in the same way as a paid-for meal so nobody knows that it's a free school meal.
- schools can benefit directly by receiving additional money from the government, (also known as pupil premium) this is around £935 per secondary age student which will be used to provide extra support for your child in school

Who can claim free school meals? If you are on a low income or receive Child Benefit and any of these benefits, you could claim free school meals for your child:

- Child Tax credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (earnings after tax and not including any benefits you get)

You may also qualify for free school meals for your child if:

- you are an asylum seeker
- you live outside Barking and Dagenham but meet the previous criteria and your child is attending a school in the borough
- your only or main income is one of the benefits listed

How to Claim Free School Meals

Please use this link to apply for Free School Meals (Pupil Premium):

<https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/financial-support-for-pupils-and-students>

This should take no more than 10 minutes to complete and in most cases you will receive an instant notification of the decision. Make sure you have your National Insurance and Child Benefit number to hand when applying as you will need these as part of the process. If you would like any further information or support with making your application please contact the school office who can arrange this for you. Email: office@barkingabbeysschool.co.uk