

Frequently asked questions about Free School Meals (FSM)

Who these FAQs are for

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

For general information about FSM, see the Hampshire website:

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/hc3s/freeschoolmeals.htm>

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

Q: Who can get Free School Meals?

A: Children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2

In September 2014, the Government introduced 'Universal Infant Free School Meals' for all children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2.

Although all infant school aged children can now automatically receive Free School Meals, it is really important that you still **register your child for Free School Meals if you are getting certain benefits** (see list below).

Your child's school will then receive extra money (**Pupil Premium**) to spend on things like:

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

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) Reference 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.

You can find more information about Further Education Free Meals here <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/hc3s/freeschoolmeals.htm>

Q: How do I register for Free School Meals?

A: Go to <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/hc3s/freeschoolmeals.htm> and click on the link '*check to see if you are eligible for free meals*' to fill in the online application form.

Trouble-shooting solutions



I do not have a computer



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.



I need help filling 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 (approximately £400 a year) 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. You can view a sample menu for Primary Schools here: <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/hc3s/hc3s-primary/primarymenu.htm>.

The menu has been translated into different languages which you can access from the same web page.

A link to the menu for Secondary Schools can be found on the same page.

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. The standard primary school menu is nut-free and all products are manufactured in a nut-free environment. For children who do not eat certain meats for religious reasons, the vegetarian alternative is always available.

You can find more information by clicking the relevant links on the bottom of this page: <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/hc3s/hc3s-primary/primarymenu.htm>

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 have a breakfast club which is free to attend or they may provide free fruit at break time.

Useful websites:

Hampshire County Council Catering Service:

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/hc3s.htm>

Hampshire Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS):

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/emtas>

