

## **DORSET COUNTY COUNCIL**

### **Children's Services**

#### **Free school meals**

Your child qualifies for free school meals as long as you receive any of the following benefits:

- 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
- Child Tax Credit. This is as long as you are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and your annual gross income isn't more than £16,190
- Working Tax Credit 'run-on' payment (paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
- Universal credit, as long as your household income is less than £7,400 a year after tax and not including any benefits you get

The school doesn't see any information about your income.

Children who get paid these benefits directly, instead of through a parent or guardian, can also get free school meals.

All children who currently receive free school meals will remain eligible until at least 31 March 2022. This also applies to any new children who are approved.

This means between now and 31 March 2022, you do not need to contact us to cancel free school meals, even if you feel your child is no longer eligible.

From 31 March 2022, any child receiving free school meals will remain eligible until they have finished that school phase, for example, a child in reception on 31 March 2022 would remain eligible until they finish primary school in 2028.

This protection has been put in place while the government rolls out Universal Credits nationally.

#### **Universal infant free school meals**

All children can get free school meals if they are in:

- Reception class
- Year 1
- Year 2

If you receive one of the qualifying benefits, you should complete a free school meal application too. This has no effect on your entitlement, but it could provide extra funding for the school. This funding is called [Pupil Premium](#) and it helps:

- support more disadvantaged pupils of all abilities
- to close the gap between these pupils and their peers

Depending on the school's policy, they can use the Pupil Premium to help with things like the cost of school uniform or school trips. Please check your school's website to find out more.

### **Apply for free school meals**

This should only take a few minutes to complete.

You will need your National Insurance number or National Asylum Seekers Service number which allow us to make automated checks to confirm your entitlement

The school doesn't see any information about your income.

If you qualify for free school meals, we will let you know straight away and send you a confirmation email shortly after.

To apply, complete a free school meals application online:

[www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals](http://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals)

or you can complete a paper application and hand into the school office.