

Important Information - Free School Meals/Pupil Premium

Update September 2020

Free school meals are available to children whose parents or carers receive financial support.

Who can get free school meals?

Your child may be able to get free school meals if you get any of the following:

- 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're not entitled to Working Tax Credit and your annual gross income is no more than £16,190
- Working Tax Credit 'run-on' payment (paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
- Universal Credit: this is 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 specific information about your income or the benefits you receive.

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

Apply for free school meals

You'll need your National Insurance number or Asylum Seekers Service number so they can make automated checks to confirm your entitlement. You may still have to upload your benefit documents to prove your entitlement.

They will let you know straight away if you qualify for free school meals.

They'll send you a confirmation email shortly after, and we will also receive a copy of this email so we can set up on the school MIS system.

Start application now at:

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/education-and-training/schools-and-learning/at-school/free-school-meals.aspx>

The Department for Education sets the eligibility criteria for free school meals.

If you want to apply for more than one child currently attending school, you can add all the details onto one form, you don't need to apply for them separately.

If a younger child starts school, and one or more of your children already receive free school meals, you'll need to apply again, adding just the new child's details.

Tell us if the council if you also get one of the qualifying benefits. The school can get extra funding if you do. This is called pupil premium. Find out other financial support you could get, including school uniform grants Pupil Premium information is available at:

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/education-and-training/schools-and-learning/at-school/pupil-premium.aspx>.

Children in care

Children in care includes children who have been fostered or adopted.

Young people in care who are in post 16 education may also be entitled to free school meals. See the current guidance about funding for 16 to 19 year olds and free meals in further education from GOV.UK at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-funding-free-meals-in-further-education-funded-institutions-for-2019-to-2020>

Free school meals during Universal Credit roll-out

All children who currently receive free school meals will remain eligible until at least 31 March 2023. This also applies to any new children who are approved. This means between now and 31 March 2023, you do not need to contact us to cancel free school meals, even if you feel your child is no longer eligible.

If you are already in receipt of the Free School Meals allowance at Gillingham School you do not need to reapply as this will continue from last year.

From 31 March 2023, 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 2023 would remain eligible until they finish primary school in 2029.

You want to cancel free school meals

You don't have to cancel free school meals until March 2023, even if your financial circumstances change.

Contact us if you want to stop getting free school meals for your child. You don't need to tell the council.

Find out other financial support you could get, including school uniform grants Pupil Premium information is available at:

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/education-and-training/schools-and-learning/at-school/pupil-premium.aspx>.

Full contact details for Free school meals team

Email: freeschoolmeals@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Tel: 01305 221090

Gillingham School contact:

Mrs Kelly Lever

Email: klever@gillingham-dorset.co.uk

IMPORTANT - if you have joined Gillingham School in September from another School in another County (e.g. Wiltshire, Somerset) please reapply for the Free School Meals to Dorset County Council using the online application.

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/education-and-training/schools-and-learning/at-school/free-school-meals.aspx>