



January 2024

Take Up of Free School Meals

Free School Meals (FSM) are a lifeline for millions of families across the country. As the cost of living crisis pushes thousands into poverty, the scheme is crucial in the fight to stop children going hungry.

I think I'm eligible - what do I need to do?

If you think your circumstances have changed or you have not checked to see if you are eligible - here's what to do:

First, check if you qualify – it is not just if you are unemployed, so please look at the eligibility list below.

Your child may be able to get free school meals if you receive 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 (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- 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 (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

Applying for FSM is straightforward, you can apply online at <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>

How it works in school

Students who are eligible for free school meals have their accounts credited daily and there are no restrictions on how or when they can use their allowance. Those entitled to FSM are treated with the strictest confidence.

Aspens, our catering provider, offer a wide range of food at mid-morning break and lunch time, including a number of meal deals. As well as the main traditional meal and pudding, they sell pasta with a range of toppings, a jacket potato with a range of fillings to choose from, hot wraps and a range of sandwiches and paninis to eat in or grab and go.

Using their entitlement

We are seeing some students who are entitled to free school meals using part or none of their allowance. If this applies to your household, please encourage your child to use their allowance each day to buy a healthy meal at lunchtime. Evidence is clear that this will set them up for the rest of the day and aid their learning throughout too. Please don't let them miss out.

If you have any questions regarding the catering please contact: info@aspens-services.com

