

Who Qualifies?

Parents living in England and Wales do not have to pay for their children's school lunches if they 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**
- ◆ **Child Tax Credit, provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income that does not exceed £16,190**
- ◆ **The Guarantee element of State Pension Credit**
- ◆ **Universal Credit**

Parents who receive Working Tax Credit are **not** entitled to claim Free School Meals for their children.

If you have recently become unemployed or have reduced your working hours and have been granted the four week working tax credits run on, then you may be entitled to free school meals.

A child over the age of 16 in receipt of any of the above qualifying benefits in their own right is also eligible to receive Free School Meals.

Application Process

The process of applying for Free School Meals is not the same throughout the country. Some local authorities offer online application and electronic benefit checks, others require parents to complete a paper form or apply by phone.

Cheshire East Council uses an online application form and we are more than happy as a school to assist in the completion of your application. As a parent, it is important that you make an initial enquiry to see if you are eligible for Free School Meals using the telephone number listed overleaf. You will need your National Insurance number.

Once your application has been approved, you will receive a letter from Cheshire East Council advising you of your family's eligibility, which the school will then be able to confirm by accessing Cheshire East Council's secure electronic database.

Your eligibility will be automatically reviewed by Cheshire East Council on a monthly basis via the Eligibility Checking Service provided by the Government. However, **you must inform both Cheshire East Council and the School immediately** if your circumstances change, including any change of address.



The poster features a blue and yellow abstract logo at the top left. The main title is 'Free School Meals Information' in bold black text. Below the title are several graphics: a green apple with 'SCHOOL MEALS MATTER' written on it, a circular logo with 'Free School Meals MATTER', a pink sign with 'Free School Meals Are you entitled?' and a fork and knife icon, and a cartoon illustration of four children sitting at a table eating. At the bottom, there is a banner with a fork and knife icon and the text 'Make | School | Meals | Count |', and the year '2016/17' in large black text. A blue and yellow abstract logo is also present at the bottom right.



At this stage it is really important that both the school and parents encourage and support students to eat their Free School Meal.

The current daily Free School Meal allowance is £2.50 and there are numerous combinations of food available from our school canteen, Mtakula (*Swahili for 'we will all eat'*). Students can choose from a hot main meal including pasta, jacket potatoes, soup, salads and a piece of fruit or dessert. There are no restrictions as to whether the allowance is spent at break or lunchtime or on the type of food a student is able to purchase.

Use of the cashless catering system in school enables your daughter to remain anonymous with the entitlement being added to the system each day. Any unspent allowance does not accrue the following day, so it is important that pupils are encouraged to take up the entitlement daily.

Your daughter will also be entitled to a packed lunch in the event that she participates in any offsite activities or trips and this should be requested in advance via the member of staff responsible for organising the trip.



Pupil Premium

In 2011 the Government introduced Pupil Premium to help children from low income families reach their full potential and to achieve higher academic grades at school.

The Government believes that Pupil Premium funding, which is in addition to the main school funding, is the best way to address current inequalities by ensuring that extra funding reaches those students who need it most.

Under this funding arrangement, schools currently receive **£935** for every student registered for **Free School Meals** at any point during the last six years, further reinforcing the need to make sure every child that qualifies is actually registered.

How to Apply

Online:

www.cheshireeast.gov.uk

Telephone:

0300 123 5012

(For an immediate decision make sure you have your National Insurance number to hand)

Contact details:

Cheshire East Council

Free School Meals

Customer Contact Centre (Macclesfield)

c/o Municipal Buildings

Crewe CW1 2BJ

Email: freeschoolmeals@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Alternatively, at Sandbach High School and Sixth Form College, Miss C Smith is responsible for recording a student's entitlement to Free School Meals and can provide guidance regarding the application process if required. You are welcome to call into school where we can assist you with telephoning or applying to Cheshire East online.

Tel: 01270 765031

Sandbach High School & Sixth Form College,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach, Cheshire CW11 3NT

email: csmith@sandhigh.cheshire.sch.uk