



Free School Meals

Free school meals are available to children up to 19 years of age who attend Warwickshire County Council maintained schools and maintained nursery schools on a full-time basis ie before and after the lunch break, and whose parents/carers are in receipt of a qualifying benefit.

Clapham Terrace receives funding for children who are entitled to free school meals, if you apply and are eligible for free school meals it automatically generates funding for school however it does not mean that your child has to eat a school dinner and you can still provide them with a packed lunch.

How to apply for free school meals:

Apply online @ <http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals>

Alternatively, you can apply by telephone on **01926 742060**. The online checking system provided by the Department of Education only confirms or denies your eligibility to claim free school meals: it does not give us any other information.

When your eligibility has been confirmed and your application processed, you will be sent a confirmation letter and we will contact the school directly regarding your child's eligibility.

Please be aware that:

- we are unable to backdate claims for free school meals to cover unpaid dinner money, or to refund dinner money paid prior to the date of a successful application.
- although we no longer require free school meal claims to be renewed on an annual basis it remains the responsibility of the claimant *not that of the school* to ensure that we have the correct information at all times, i.e. a current home address, the names of all the children requiring free school meals and the schools they currently attend.

Qualifying for free school meals

The current criteria for claiming free school meals are:

- family receives Income Support or Income-Based Job Seekers Allowance. Please note, Contribution-Based Job Seeker's Allowance does not qualify for free school meals.
- family receives the Guarantee element of State Pension Credit.
- family receives Child Tax Credit and has an annual taxable income, as assessed by HMRC, not in excess of £16,190. Please note, families who are also awarded Working Tax Credit do not qualify to claim free school meals regardless of income.
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
- Employment and Support Allowance (Income Related). Please note, Contribution-Based E&SA does not qualify for free school meals.

Temporary qualification for free school meals

You become eligible to claim free school meals:

- where you have been entitled to 'Working Tax Credit' during the four-week period immediately after your employment ceases
- or after you start to work less than 16 hours per week

You need to apply by completing a hard-copy application form and sending it to us with a copy of your 'Tax Credit Decision Notice'. Free school meals authorisation will not be granted prior to the date of application.

In order to qualify for free school meals after the four week period expires you will need to be in receipt of one of the other qualifying benefits listed above, and we will need to be able to verify that.

Changes to your benefit entitlement

We do routine eligibility checks on all current claims throughout the year. Please contact us immediately if your benefit changes or ends, as it may mean that you no longer qualify to claim free school meals. It is equally important that you tell us if your partner is now claiming the family's qualifying benefit for free school meals as we will need an application from them.

If you do not notify us that your family is no longer eligible for free school meals, you may be invoiced for the cost of any free meals taken that you were not entitled to.

Other help

Benefit Helpline contact numbers:

0845 3003900

Mon - Fri 8am to 8pm and Sat 8am to 4pm

For deaf or hard of hearing or speech impaired: 08453003909

JobCentre Plus

0800 0556688

Mon - Fri 8am - 8pm

For deaf or hard of hearing or speech impaired: 0800 0556688

If you have any questions with regard to applying for Free School Meals or you need help to complete an application please contact the office and we will assist you accordingly.