

Universal Infant Free School Meals

Or Free School Meals

What's the difference? Who gets a voucher?

Universal Infant Free School Meals were introduced by the government in 2014 to give all children, regardless of their economic background, a meal at school at lunchtime. It was a great idea to give all children a hot meal at school helping many families by saving them dinner money or money buying food to make packed lunches. It was for everyone – no application needed!

Free School Meals have been around for much longer than this. They were introduced many years ago to help low income families. Parents had to apply for this benefit and were eligible due to certain benefits they obtained.

More recently, the government linked this means tested benefit, to providing additional money to support children in school called Pupil Premium. The school get additional pupil premium money into their budget based on the numbers of pupils eligible to free school meals.

This has led to some understandable confusion. **Only parents who have a means tested, registered entitlement to free school meals will get the £15 voucher.**

I've lost my job – might I be entitled now?

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 (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)

If you think you may now be entitled to means tested free school meals for your children, you need to contact your child's school. They will help you but need information from you, such as your national insurance number, to do this.

Get in touch with your child's school. schooloffice@somerville.wirral.sch.uk

I've been furloughed and my income has fallen – might I be entitled now?

Check yourself <https://www.cloudforedu.org.uk/ofsm/sims-wirral/>

or **Get in touch Somerville.**

If you are not entitled now, once the school has the relevant details from you and enters it into the system, you will automatically be notified if you become entitled to means tested free school meals. In the meantime, there are other sources of support available to you in the community. Please visit <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/coronavirus-updates/emergency-food> for information on accessing help with food or call the Council Coronavirus helpline on 0151 666 5050, Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

Your child's school wants to help you with this but can only allocate the vouchers according to the government criteria. You need to provide the information to help them check if you qualify.

Try and check yourself first online at
<https://www.cloudforedu.org.uk/ofsm/sims-wirral/>

Or if you still think you are eligible but don't get approval from the site above then get in touch with
[**somervilleschooloffice@somerville.wirral.sch.uk**](mailto:somervilleschooloffice@somerville.wirral.sch.uk)