**Information for Parents**

The attached form is designed to collect information to assess eligibility for a range of benefits, including;

* Free School Meals, where your child will be given a healthy lunch on every day that they attend school before and after lunch while they are eligible.
* Early Years Pupil Premium and Pupil Premium where your child’s school will be given additional funding to improve educational outcomes for your child
* Two year old funding where your child may be eligible for free 15 hour place from the term after they turn two.

For more information please see [www.newcastle.gov.uk/freeschoolmeal](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/freeschoolmeal)s

Your child may be eligible for a **Free School meal** (FSM) if they are 3 – 19 years old and you receive one of the following:

* Universal Credit (provided you have an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400, as assessed by earnings from up to three of your most recent assessment periods)
* 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 guarantee 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 four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit

All pupils in Reception, year 1 and year 2 can automatically receive a free school meal under the Universal Infant Free School Meals programme.

Pupils who receive one of the above benefits in their own right may also be eligible for FSM. In these cases the attached form must be completed by the pupil.

Your child may be eligible for **Early Years Pupil Premium** (EYPP) if they are 3 or 4 years old, and:

* you meet the criteria for FSM (see above)
* they are looked after by a local council
* they have left care under a special guardianship order, child arrangements order or adoption order

You child may be eligible for **Two Year Old Funding** if they are 2 years old and;

* you meet the criteria for FSM (see above)
* you receive tax credits and have an annual income under £16,190 before tax
* they are looked after by a local council
* they have a current statement of special education needs (SEN) or an Education Health and Care Plan
* they get Disability Living Allowance
* they have left care under a special guardianship order, child arrangements order or adoption order

**I think my child is eligible, what do I do next?**

Complete a form online at: [www.newcastle.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals) or; Complete the attached form and hand it into your school or send it directly to us at:

Access, Admissions and Attendance

Newcastle City Council

3rd Floor, Civic Centre

Barras Bridge

Newcastle upon Tyne

NE1 8QH

We will check your eligibility using an online checking system provided by the Department for Education. This system links with your benefit provider and confirms whether or not you are eligible for one of the FSM associated benefits. It does not provide us with any other information, or tell us which benefits you receive.

We will let you and your child’s school know the outcome of your check via either; your child’s school, text message, email or letter, this will depend on the contact details you provide us and the age of your child.

Sometimes you may need to provide additional information before we can make a decision on whether or not your child is eligible.  In these circumstances we or your child’s school will ask you to provide additional proof of benefit. In most cases, errors are due to the wrong details being supplied, such as mis-spellings of National Insurance numbers, names or the wrong date of birth. To avoid being asked for additional information and delaying your claim, please enter these details carefully and clearly.

We want **all** parents to register their details as soon as possible so that we can offer you or your child’s school all FSM associated benefits as soon as possible, and continue to offer these throughout your child’s education. Claiming free school meals could raise an extra £2,000 for your child’s school and this could fund valuable support like extra tuition, additional teaching staff or after school activities. This additional money is available for every child who meets the FSM criteria above. It is therefore important to register your details, even if your child is in reception, year 1 or year 2 and gets a free meal under the Universal Infant Free School Meals programme, or you want to give your child a packed lunch. We want to ensure your child’s school receives as much funding as possible.

If you have been asked for this information before we are sorry, we want to make sure we are being clear about what we are doing with your information. Once you have completed this form you will not be asked by us for these details again.

The Government have agreed to protect all Free School Meals claims during the Universal Credit roll-out (expected to be complete by 2022), and then until the end of the pupil’s phase of education (See table below). This protection will apply to all existing claims, and new claims made during the roll out. Each child’s protection will be specific to them. During your child’s protected period their eligibility to Free School Meals will not change, regardless of any change in circumstances you have.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Current Year Group (May 2018)** | **Protection Ends\*** |
| Nursery | End of Primary (year 6) |
| Reception | End of Primary (year 6) |
| Year 1 | End of Primary (year 6) |
| Year 2 | End of Secondary (year 11) |
| Year 3 | End of Secondary (year 11) |
| Year 4 | End of Secondary (year 11) |
| Year 5 | End of Secondary (year 11) |
| Year 6 | End of Secondary (year 11) |
| Year 7 | End of Secondary (year 11) |
| Year 8 | End of Secondary (year 11) |
| Year 9 | End of Secondary (year 11) |
| Year 10 | End of Secondary (year 11) |
| Year 11 | End of Secondary (year 11) |

*\* Table will be updated in September 2018*

Pupils who are attending a middle school in 2022 will be protected until the end of high school (year 11). Pupils attending a first school in 2022 will be protected until at least the end of first school (Year 4).

**My circumstances have changed, what do I do?**

A change in your circumstances will **not** affect your child’s place in pre-school or school. Outside of the protection outlined above it may affect your entitlement to FSM associated benefits. For this reason, if your circumstances do change you need to let us know. You can do this by emailing admissions.information@newcastle.gov.uk or calling 0191 2787878 and asking for ‘Free school Meals’.

We will also carry out regular audits to establish if any circumstances have changed to make a child either eligible or no longer eligible. If there is going to be a change to your FSM status we will let you know.

**Data Privacy**

The General Data Protection Act May 2018 puts in place certain safeguards regarding the use of personal data by organisations, including the Department for Education (DfE), local authorities and schools. The Act gives rights to those about whom data is held, such as pupils, their parents and teachers (known as data subjects). This includes:

* the right to know the types of data being held;
* why it is being held; and
* to whom it may be communicated.

You also have the right to request your data is corrected, updated or erased. In these circumstances, this will lead to a new assessment of your child’s eligibility which may change the outcome of the decision.

Free School Meals+ applications are used to perform a check with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP); this is an automated service and if the response is that your child is not eligible we will contact you to ask you to provide additional evidence to confirm your claim. We will also continue to check your data with the DWP and write when you become eligible unless you ask us to stop. This is to prevent you from having to reapply and to make sure if you become eligible this is processed as soon as possible.

The information which you provide for FSM+ will be stored on our secure recording system and will be used to confirm eligibility for Pupil Premium, Early Years Pupil Premium and the 2 Year Old Offer. It may also be used if you make an application for Free School Travel in the future.

We will not share your personal details with anyone and will only share the result of your check with your child’s school, Early Years provider/s (if applicable) and the Department for Education.

Information will be stored and used in line with our retention policy or until you ask for this to be changed. Should you have any concerns in relation to how your information or the information relating to your child/ren is being or will be used, or shared, please contact the Access, Admissions and Attendance Service at admissions.information@newcastle.gov.uk