

Free school meals

From September 2014 there is a statutory requirement for state-funded schools in England to provide free school meals to all pupils in reception, year 1 and year 2.

All children attending state-funded schools are eligible to receive a free school meal if their parent receives one of the following benefits:

- income support
- income-based jobseekers allowance
- income-related employment support allowance
- support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guarantee element of state pension credit
- child tax credit (provided they are not entitled to working tax credit) and have an annual income that does not exceed £16,190 (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs)

Children aged 7 and under attending a Nottinghamshire County Council school will also be entitled to **free school milk** if the parent receives one of the qualifying benefits.

Additional funding for your child's school

It is important that all parents who receive one of the benefits listed above register for free school meals as this will enable your child's school to claim pupil premium allocation. The pupil premium is additional funding given to publicly funded schools in England to raise attainment. This additional funding for schools can help to buy new equipment and resources.

In the 2014-2015 financial year, schools will receive:

- £1,300 for each eligible primary-aged pupil
- £935 for each eligible secondary-aged pupil

Children who receive income support or income related employment support allowance in their own right are also eligible to receive free school meals (this situation often applies to post-16 pupils in special schools).

A greater number of school nurseries will now be offering sessions over the lunch time period in order to accommodate the new 15 hour entitlement. Children who attend school nurseries between the period 11am and 2pm may also be eligible to receive free school meals if they meet the eligibility criteria detailed above.

Registering for free school meals

Parents can contact the free school meals team by telephoning 01623 433009 or by visiting <http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/learning/schools/school-dinners/free-school-meals/>. The information needed to register includes:

- personal details (including national insurance number and date of birth)
- partner's personal details and child's details in full including their date of birth and the school they attend
- If eligible for free school meals and/or milk the start date will normally be within two days of parents contacting us and entitlement being verified. We will also write to confirm the date the child's free school meals and milk will start.

Children will continue to receive free school meals and milk while parents are receiving the qualifying benefit.