

September 2018

## **Who is entitled to Free School Meals?**

The eligibility criteria for Free School Meals have changed. Parents/carers do not have to pay for school lunches if they receive any of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit, provided they have an annual net earned income not exceeding £7,400 (£616.67 per month)
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part 6 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 gross income of no more than £16,190, as assessed by HMRC
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit

Students who receive any of the qualifying benefits listed above in their own right are also eligible to receive free school meals.

## **What if my circumstances change?**

You should notify the school:

- if you start work and come off benefits
- if you change address
- if your child changes school

## **How to apply**

If you think you might be eligible for Free School Meals, please complete the [registration form](#) and return it to the school office. The information you provide will be used to check if you are in receipt of a qualifying benefit and, if you are on Universal Credit, that your earnings do not exceed the threshold. If you claim Universal Credit, your earnings will be assessed from up to three months of your last Universal Credit assessment. The person who is in receipt of the qualifying benefit will need to complete the form and will be asked to complete their full name, date of birth and National Insurance number. If appropriate, it is recommended that both parents' information is provided.

## **I am currently claiming Free School Meals – what does this mean for me?**

Most people won't be affected by the new criteria. If you are currently claiming Free School Meals, but don't meet the new criteria, your child will continue to receive Free School Meals until the end of the Universal Credit roll out period. This will apply even if your earnings rise above the new threshold or if you stop being entitled to Universal Credit. The roll out period is currently

scheduled to end in March 2022. Once Universal Credit is fully rolled out, your child will keep their Free School Meal until the end of their current phase of education.

Please do not hesitate to contact the school or Lincolnshire County Council if you have any queries.