

Free School Meals - Essential need to know...at a glance

How can families apply for free school meals?

Families should apply for free school meals online. To apply and find out more information visit [Free school meals | East Sussex County Council](#)

Applicants receive an immediate result.

Paper applications should only be used for families unable to apply online. Please scan and email forms to freeschoolmeals@eastsussex.gov.uk Before doing so please check the whole form has been completed (particularly the applicant's surname, date of birth and National Insurance number) and please ensure the form is clear and readable.

How do schools find out if a child is eligible for FSM?

Online/paper applications - We will email you when a child becomes entitled.

School Access Module (SAM) - Schools with SAM will be able to view a child's eligibility and run their own reports through SAM. The data is linked directly to our database.

Reports - Special schools are sent FSM reports at the beginning of each term via AnyComms or email.

FSM eligibility checks for reception children

At the start of each academic year, all schools with a reception intake should send their fsm report to ensure you are claiming maximum Pupil Premium Grant funding. Instructions can be found on Czone [Check pupil premium for reception | Czone \(eastsussex.gov.uk\)](#)

We do not accept paper applications for the Reception intake.

Transitional-protection arrangements

To minimise the impact of the rollout of Universal Credit, some pupils are currently protected against losing their benefits-related free school meals.

Once Universal Credit is fully rolled out (planned for March 2025) any existing pupil whose parent no longer meets the eligibility criteria at that point will continue to receive free school meals until the end of their current phase of education, i.e. primary or secondary.

New pupils not part of the annual intake

Children who have moved to your school from a different county or a school that does not buy our service - If children have moved to your school from a different county or a school which does not buy our service (a list of these schools can be found at [Free school meals | East Sussex County Council](#)) we may not have a fsm record for them. If their common transfer file (ctf) confirms they are entitled, give them free meals and complete and return a "movers in" form. The form can be found on Czone at [Applications and transfers | Czone \(eastsussex.gov.uk\)](#) Parents should not be asked to

apply for free meals again if the child is already entitled. If the ctf doesn't show entitlement, parents must apply.

Children who have moved to your school from another East Sussex school - Tell us when a child transfers from another East Sussex school and the ctf shows they qualify for fsm. We will amend their attendance and verify entitlement. Please do not ask parents to apply.

Children moving from primary to secondary school

FSM entitlement follows the child from primary to secondary school; families should not be asked to reapply.

Please be aware we don't hold fsm information on all children. For those pupils who previously attended an out of county school or an academy that does not use our service, you will need to check their ATF to confirm if they are entitled and let the FSM team know by completing a "movers in" form (see *New pupils not part of the annual intake* above).

Frequently asked questions

Do younger siblings automatically qualify for free school meals? - No. The younger child must be entitled when an application is made. Older siblings will remain entitled due to the transitional-protection rules. It is quite normal for an older child to be entitled, but a younger sibling not.

Are Looked After Children automatically entitled to free school meals? - No. LAC children are treated the same as all others and an application is required.

Can asylum seekers or children with No Recourse to Public Funds apply for free school meals? - Asylum seekers do not automatically qualify for free meals and should apply in the usual way. They may have a NASS number instead of a National Insurance number.

Families with No Recourse to Public Funds should request an application form from the FSM team.

Can children be removed from the free school meals list? - No, children cannot be removed from the list. They do not need to take their free meal, but schools would continue to receive Pupil Premium for them.

How you can help us

Email us at freeschoolmeals@eastsussex.gov.uk

- when a child leaves your school and provide us with their leaving date.
- when you have a query. Please include the child's full legal name (first name first) and their date of birth. Please take care with spellings.