

Dear Parent / Carer

At Paxton Academy Sports and Science we are always looking for ways to support our families and ensure that they are kept up to date with government initiatives and legislation. Over the past few years there have been a number of new initiatives and changes in legislation which relate directly to primary school children.

Universal Free School Meals (UFSM)

This is completely different to Free School Meals and Pupil Premium. In September 2014 the Government introduced Universal Free School Meals. This entitles every pupil in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 to have a free healthy hot lunch every day your child is in school. However, Parents of children in Years 3 to 6 ordinarily have to pay for lunches, it is really important that **ALL our parents check to see if their children are eligible for free school meals** as if parents receive any of the following benefits, their children may still qualify for a free school meal.

Your child may be eligible for free school meals if you are in receipt of any one of the following:

Who is eligible for free school meals?

Pupils in receipt of, or whose parents are in receipt of, one or more of the following benefits:

- 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 existing free school meals claimants will continue to receive free school meals whilst Universal Credit is rolled out. This will apply even if their earnings rise above the new threshold during that time.
- Any child who gained eligibility for free school meals after 1 April 2018 will be protected against losing free school meals during the Universal Credit rollout period.

Important Note: From 1 April 2018 the Department for Education made changes to the Universal Credit Thresholds. Any child eligible for Free School Meals before this date will be protected until 31 March 2022.

Once Universal Credit is fully rolled out (expected to complete in March 2022) any existing claimants that no longer meet the eligibility criteria at that point (because they are earning above the threshold or are no longer a recipient of Universal Credit) **will continue to receive free school meals until the end of their current phase of primary education.**

You can Check Your Free School Meals Eligibility

We appreciate that this legislation can be confusing for parents to know if they are entitled to Free School Meals. To find out whether your child qualifies for free school meals, please fill in the details requested on this the following site:

<https://pps.lgfl.org.uk/>

By entering a few simple details, Name, DOB, NI Number, parents can use this website to check your eligibility. A Certificate of Eligibility is available through our website for any child eligible for a free school meal that is attending a school in England. The **Certificate of Eligibility will need to be provided to school** as evidence of free school meal eligibility.

Eligibility checker returns a result 'Not Eligible'.

Please do not worry if the eligibility checker returns a result 'Not Eligible'. This maybe because the data from the DWP does not reflect the fact that a child is protected (any pupil eligible for Free school meals before 1 April 2018 will be protected until 31 March 2022). Parents instead will be asked to provide proof of their benefit start date.

ALL our parents should check eligibility, even if they are not sure.

Please be assured there is no catch, no cost and no advertising. LGfL (a UK education charity set up in 2001 and owned by London's 33 local authorities) exists to support education and is leading this initiative to make it easier for parents to apply for free school meals and to encourage the drawdown of unclaimed Pupil Premium.

We can also check your eligibility for you

As a school we have signed up to a government eligibility checking service which allows us to check your eligibility for free school meals on your behalf. All you need to do is to provide us with a few key pieces of information – name, date of birth and national insurance number. If you would like us to check your eligibility we have attached at the bottom of this letter a form for you to complete and return to the school office. ***We suggest all parents complete this form to ensure they are not missing out on the benefits of a hot, nutrition lunch for their child and also additional funding which will support your child in school.***

Incentive For Checking

As a thank you to parents for checking their eligibility, any parent that returns a Certificate that confirms eligibility via <https://pps.lgfl.org.uk/> or is found to be free school meals eligible from our government checking service (that we do not already have recorded as already being eligible for free school meals) will receive a £50 voucher spend in Bubble Gum for taking the time to do this.

Explanatory Information Pupil Premium Grant (PPG)

In addition to this, in April 2011 the Government introduced the Pupil Premium Grant. This money is allocated to schools for all children who are registered for Free School Meals, children who have been looked-after continuously for more than 6 months by the Local Authority or in foster care and children with parents in the Armed Forces. Each school is able to decide how best to use the funding to impact on raising standards across the school.

Here at Paxton Academy as well as using the funding to help raise achievement we will also allocate funding towards the following:

- School/residential trips
- Breakfast club and after school clubs
- School uniform

Additional information

If you would like any additional information regarding any of the above, please contact the administration team on 0208 6832308.

Please place an **X** in the box below if you are not sure whether your **joint income** is over £16,190, or whether you are in receipt of one of the benefits listed above, but you would like still like to check whether your child is eligible for a free school meal:

Declaration

I declare that the information I have given here is true and complete, and I agree that I will inform the school of any changes in writing to my financial circumstances. I also understand that failure to do so may result in my repaying the full cost of meals from the date of change.

I agree that you will use the information I have provided to process my claim for free school lunches and will contact other sources as allowed by the law to verify my initial, and ongoing, entitlement.

I understand that the results of any free school lunch eligibility check may also be used to assess my entitlement to any further 'benefits' should they be appropriate.

Parent/Guardians Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

WARNING: The Authority is under a duty to protect the public funds it administers and to this end may use the information you have provided on this form within its Authority for the prevention and detection of fraud. It may also share this information with other bodies administering public funds solely for these purposes.

School Use Only (1)	
Information Checked by: _____	Position: _____
Information sent to the Department of Education & Social Services on _____ (date)	
Response received on: _____ (date)	
Eligibility Confirmed	<input type="checkbox"/> (✓)
Non Eligibility Confirmed	<input type="checkbox"/> (✓)
Date: _____	

Please retain this form on the pupil's file.

About this form

From September 2014 all children who are in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2 in a state-funded school will be offered a free healthy school lunch. Pupils in other school years will also be offered a free school lunch if their parent is receiving any of the welfare benefits listed overleaf.

Registering could raise money for you child's school

Registering for free school meals could raise an extra £1300 for your child's school, to fund valuable support like extra tuition, additional teaching staff or after school activities.

The additional money is available from central government for every child whose parents are receiving one of the welfare benefits listed overleaf on this form. It is therefore important to sign up for free school meals, even if your child is in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2 so that your child's school receives as much funding as possible.

How this information in this form will be used

The information you provide on this form will be used by the local authority to confirm receipt of one of the listed welfare benefits. Once this is confirmed, this helps to decide how much money your child's school will receive each year.

This information will also be used in relation to children in Year 3 or above to decide whether they are eligible for free school meals.

Thank you for completing this application form and helping to make your child's school is as well funded.

We are committed to ensuring that the personal and sensitive information that we hold about you is protected and kept safe and secure and we have measures in place to prevent the loss, misuse or alteration of your personal information.

We will use this information you provide to assess entitlement to free school meals.