

Free school meals are available to all key stage one pupils and to children whose parents receive certain benefits.

These include one or more of the following:

- income support;
- income-based Jobseekers' allowance;
- income-related employment and support allowance;
- income-based and contributions-based JSA or ESA on an equal basis;
- child tax credit, provided you are not entitled to working tax credit, and have an annual household income (as assessed by HM Revenue and Customs) that does not exceed £16,190;
- support under part VI of the immigration and asylum act 1999;
- guarantee element of state pension credit; or
- universal credit - during the initial roll-out of the benefit.

Where parents are entitled to working tax credit during a four-week "run-on" period immediately after their employment has ceased, or after they have started to work fewer than 16 hours a week, their children are entitled to free school meals.

Children who receive income support or income-based Jobseekers' allowance in their own right are also entitled to free school meals.

If you meet the above criteria, apply by using the [application form \(pdf / 189 KB\)](#). Applications are usually processed the same day. If your child is entitled to free school meals you will receive a letter confirming the date when the meals will start. The school will also be notified. You should continue to pay until confirmation comes through. Schools may be able to arrange reimbursement of payment made while your entitlement is being confirmed. If you are not entitled to free school meals, you will be notified in writing.

Free school meals claims cannot be backdated. They are awarded from the date we receive the application, once eligibility is confirmed.

If you have moved to North Yorkshire from another authority area, your entitlement to free school meals does not automatically transfer. You will need to re-apply to us.

Universal free school meals for infants

From September 2014 all children in key stage one, which includes reception, year one and year two, are entitled to a free school meal. Parents who are on benefits and meet the above criteria are still encouraged to [apply for additional funding \(pdf / 328 KB\)](#) known as pupil premium funding. This benefits the school and helps increase your child's attainment. For further information on free meals please contact your child's school.

Frequently asked questions

If my child is at nursery or sixth form, are they still entitled to free school meals?

Nursery aged children can receive free school meals if:

- they are aged three or over;
- they are receiving a minimum of two and a half hours free nursery provision, both before and after the lunchtime period; and
- they attend a local authority maintained nursery, not a private one.

Post-16 students can receive free school meals if they attend tertiary education in a school, but not if they attend a sixth form college.

What will my child receive as a recipient of free school meals?

With effect from April 2013 the Council is no longer allowed to retain funding to help smooth the cost of meals provision across schools.

One of the impacts of this change is that we can no longer set a standard price for the cost of a school meal in North Yorkshire schools. It is for each school to decide how much to charge parents for a school meal and therefore the value of a free school meal may vary from school to school. Most schools are continuing to use a price of approximately £2.10.

View sample menus on our [school meals page](#).

What do I need to do if my circumstances change?

We automatically check your entitlement to ensure you are still eligible, but if your circumstances change, for example, if you start work and no longer receive a qualifying benefit, or if your benefit is transferred to a partner's name, you must inform the school and the welfare team immediately.

You should also advise the school and the welfare team if you change address or if your child changes school.

If you are found to be no longer eligible for free school meals, you will receive a letter confirming the date your child's meals will stop and you will need to make alternative arrangements from that date.