



The Crossways Schools
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Dear Parents/Carers

Changes to free school meal eligibility under Universal Credit

The eligibility criteria for free school meals have been changed. This letter explains the changes and how they might affect you.

What are the new eligibility criteria?

Children are entitled to receive free school meals if they or their parents or guardians receive any of the benefits below.

- 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 Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit, provided they are not also 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

I don't currently claim free school meals – what does this mean for me?

If you think you might be eligible for free school meals, you can apply online via the online portal on the South Gloucestershire Council website, using the link below or by calling 01454 868008. 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 of your last Universal Credit assessment periods. If your child is eligible you will receive a confirmation message, and the school will be notified directly. If you are not eligible, you will be presented with a message stating this.

Important Information

If you are eligible to claim, we would encourage you to do so even if you do not wish your child to have a meal. Registering your child means that the school gets additional funding which benefits educational provision at the school. You can still apply for free school meals if you have infant children who get a paid school meal anyway.

Please note, if you have already completed a primary school place application for the 2018/19 academic year via the portal, you do not need to re-register when applying for free school meals. Please use the login details that you have already set up.

- [Apply for free school meals](#)

If you only have printed copy of this letter, please use the following link:

- <http://www.southglos.gov.uk/advice-and-benefits/benefits/free-school-meals/>

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 do not meet the new criteria, your child will continue to receive free school meals until the end of the Universal Credit rollout period. This will apply even if your earnings rise above the new threshold or if you stop being entitled to Universal Credit. The rollout 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, i.e. primary or secondary.

Where can I get more information?

If you need any further information, please speak to the school office or South Gloucestershire Council. You can also visit the free school meal website: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>

Yours sincerely



Mark Toogood
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