

Thornton Primary School
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Changes to free school meal eligibility under Universal Credit

Dear Parents and Carers,

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, call in to the school office or apply online at <https://www.bradford.gov.uk/benefits/applying-for-benefits/free-school-meals/>

The information you will be asked to provide is:

- Your Full Name
- Your Address including Postcode
- Your Date of Birth and National Insurance number
- The full names of your children
- The Date of Birth of your children
- The name and address of their school

This 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 you are eligible, school will be notified. Your child will receive free school meals and the school will receive extra funding.

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're 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 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 come to the school office. You can also visit the free school meal website: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-freeschool-meals>

If you are at all unsure, please come and check at the office. If you bring the details listed with you, (on the front of this letter) then we will be able to check online straight away for you. Once we receive the notification, we can then let you know straight away.

These new rules mean that even if your circumstances change for a short while, your child will remain eligible for Free School Meals until they leave Primary School. If you were in receipt of Free School Meals for your child at the start of April this year, this should not change until March 2022 or until your child leaves Primary School. Again, if you think you should be entitled to Free School meals, please come and check with the office staff.

I hope this information is useful.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs. E. Davison - Headteacher

