

Astbury St. Mary's Church of England Primary School

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Free School Meals

From September 2014 there has been two free school meal schemes;

Universal Infant Free School Meals and Income Related Free School Meals.

The Government provide free school meals to all children attending Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. This is called Universal Infant Free School Meals, and you may see the abbreviation UIFSMs used.

However, it is vital that families still register with the Free School Meals Team, if they meet the criteria set out below, even if their child falls within the UIFSMs classes as above. This is important to the funding schools receive, as a specific fund called Pupil Premium is generated by this registered eligibility. This will amount to £1300 per eligible pupil. This funding is used to support eligible pupils with their education.

Please be assured that at Astbury Primary School, we do not receive information about your individual circumstances from Cheshire East. We are simply notified of eligibility start and end dates. Your child/children cannot be identified in any way to other pupils.

Cheshire East Council will continue to award free school meals to the families that receive the qualifying incomes as outlined below, and whose children attend a Cheshire East school.

- Income support (IS)
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA)
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA(IR))
- support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit, provided you are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) that does not exceed **£16,190**.
- The Guarantee element of State Pension Credit.
- Children who receive Income Support or Income Based Job Seekers Allowance in their own right are also entitled to receive free school meals.
- If you have recently become unemployed or have reduced your working hours and have been granted the four week working tax credits run on, then you may be entitled to free school meals. **Please call the Cheshire East Schools Team on 0300 123 5012 for advice.**



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If You Think You Are Eligible

All you have to do is phone Cheshire East on the number below and they will let you know if the children in your care are entitled to Free School Meals.

Free School Meals Helpline - 0300 123 5012. Alternatively you can complete the Free School Meals enquiry form online.

http://forms.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ShowForm.aspx?form=~sitecollection/FormServerTemplates/ce_free_school_meals.xsn&redirect=www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/system_pages/acknowledgement/ce_free_school_meals.aspx

Cheshire East will assess your claim using their eligibility checker to confirm your entitlement; if successful your claim will begin the same day. If your claim is not successful or if they require any further information they will contact you by phone or email.

Please have your National Insurance number available when you contact the Schools team.

What Happens Next?

Your entitlement will begin on the day your fully completed application form with the required proof of eligibility is received at the Customer Contact Centre not the date you become eligible to any of the stated benefits. Cheshire East is **unable to backdate claims** for Free School Meals to cover unpaid dinner money, or to refund any dinner money paid prior to the date of a successful application. A letter of entitlement will be issued to you by this office.

How Are The Arrangements Reviewed?

Eligibility for free school meals is reviewed periodically and providing you are still eligible your claim will be renewed automatically. It may be necessary for parents/carers to re-apply completing an application form; this will be sent out to you if required. It is the responsibility of the claimant and not that of the school to ensure that we have the correct information.

You must notify the Cheshire East Customer Contact Centre:-

- If you stop receiving any of the stated benefits or commence receiving Working Tax Credit
- Your child changes school or leaves school
- You change your address

If you do not notify Cheshire East of any changes in your circumstances then you may be invoiced for the cost of any free school meals taken that you were not entitled to.

Can I Appeal Against The Free School Meals Eligibility Criteria?

Local Authorities do not set the qualifying criteria for free school meals and Cheshire East are unable to waive them. Any change to the criteria is a matter for central, not local government so your Member of Parliament is the appropriate person to contact about this issue.



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