



EVINGTON VALLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Caring and Learning Together

April 2018

Dear Parent / Carer

FREE SCHOOL MEAL ENTITLEMENT

We wanted to make you aware that the Government has recently announced changes to the eligibility criteria for free school meals. These are the result of the rollout of Universal Credit, which is replacing many of the existing social security benefits that are currently used to establish who is eligible for free school meals.

The changes took effect from 1st April 2018 and may impact upon some of our families.

1) Changes to the eligibility criteria for new free school meal claimants

Universal Credit will eventually replace Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit, Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance.

From 1st April, Universal Credit claimants who have annual net earned income of less than £7,400 will be entitled to claim free school meals for their children. This figure excludes social security benefit income, so some households will be able to receive a total of up to £24,000 annually from earnings and benefits combined and still qualify for free school meals.

2) Protection of entitlement for existing free school meal claimants

The Government has introduced protection for existing free school meal pupils, so that their entitlement will not immediately be cancelled if their parent's benefits change.

Any pupil eligible for free school meals on 1st April 2018 will therefore retain their eligibility until the end of the Universal Credit rollout period (31st March 2022) regardless of any change in their parent's circumstances. So no existing free school meals claims will be cancelled in the next 4 years.

Any pupil who becomes eligible under the amended criteria during the rollout of Universal Credit (i.e. between 1st April 2018 and 31st March 2022) will also retain their eligibility until 31st March 2022, regardless of any changes in their parents' circumstances. Further time limited protection for existing claimants will also exist after 31st March 2022, which will mean that pupils eligible on that date will continue to receive free school meals until the end of their current phase of education (i.e. until they finish either Year 6 or Year 11).

There are many benefits from registering your child for free school meals:

- a hot, freshly prepared meal in school each day
- a 189ml portion of semi-skimmed milk every day, delivered fresh and chilled to the classroom
- an extra £1,320 for the school, to fund improving quality first teaching, and targeted support including interventions.

We, therefore encourage you to apply for free school meals if you think you are eligible. This includes parents of children in reception (F2), Year 1 or Year 2 who currently receive a Universal Free School Meal. Please note, your child doesn't have to have a hot dinner in school for you to apply.

Applications can be made:

- Online at: www.leicester.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals
- By phone on 0116 4541009 (Option 3)

Yours faithfully

Miss Ahern
School Business Manager

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