



City of Westminster

Free School Meal Applications - Important Notes

Parents/guardians will no longer be required to send a copy of their benefit evidence to support their claim, except if you receive Child Tax Credit you will need to provide a copy of pages 1-4 of your Tax Credit Award Notice (TC602).

We will check your entitlement on the Free School Meals Eligibility Checking System – DCSF Online Hub where data is held by the Department of Work and Pensions, the Home Office and HMRC (Revenue and Customs). If the DCSF Hub is unable to confirm that you are entitled to free school meals, it will be necessary for us to ask you to provide evidence.

From 1 May 2009 where a parent is entitled to Working Tax Credit during the four-week period immediately after their employment ceases, or after they start to work less than 16 hours per week, their children are entitled to free school meals.

If you are applying for the first time you will need to provide a copy of your child's long birth certificate or a recent child benefit letter that confirms your child's date of birth and that you are the parent/guardian responsible for the child named on the application form. You can call the Child Benefit Helpline on 0845 302 1444 to request an entitlement letter that confirms your child's date of birth.

Once you have completed the application form (and have photocopies of any documents we require) and the school has stamped it you can:

- Let the school pass the application form to us,
- Hand it in at a Westminster One Stop Service Centre (Victoria Street, Church Street, Harrow Road) or
- Send it to Westminster City Council, FSM, PO Box 5744, Dingwall, IV15 9XB.

Normally your child will be eligible for free school meals from the date we receive your application form. If we have to write and ask for additional information and you return it to this office within 2 weeks, the same date will be used. But if you take longer than 2 weeks to return the items to this office, the start date for the free school meals will be the date we receive the additional information.

Applications for free school meals can't be backdated. However if you are making a new application your child's school can provide emergency meals for up to 4 weeks whilst your application is processed, if you give them proof that you receive benefits. They will add a note to the application form to confirm the date the emergency meals started.

Free school meals are authorised for one year. Please make sure that you reapply in good time, before the authorisation expires; you will have to pay for school meals if the authorisation runs out.