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- **Have your home finances recently changed for the worse?**
- **Are you on a lower income or are claiming a benefit?**
- **Could you be entitled to normal Free School Meals?**

APPLY NOW TO RECEIVE OTHER BENEFITS INCLUDING UP TO £40 TO SPEND ON UNIFORM!

Dear Parents / Carers,

By now you will all be aware that pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are entitled to 'Universal Free School Meals' regardless of your income, as part of a Government scheme. However, we are writing to remind you that if your child is entitled officially to receive normal **Free School Meals** it is absolutely **crucial** that you apply for this in the usual way.

Being on the **Free School Meals** register ensures the following benefits for you and your family:

- Extra money for school which can then be spent on resources, staff and enrichment for all our children. This extra money is called the **Pupil Premium** and its purpose is to ensure that children from low income families are not at a financial disadvantage during their education.
- Up to £40 to spend on uniform during the school year.
- Free lunches provided for child/ren each day in school. Currently these are in the form of packed lunch which includes; sandwiches, crisps, fruit and a sweet treat (please see photos to the right).



Over the past few months, you will probably have seen in the news that ALL children in receipt of normal **Free School Meals** were eligible for a £15 per week voucher to spend on food at local supermarkets during the school closure period and **in the event of any future closure we want to ensure that you are receiving all support available to your family.**

So, don't miss out on opportunities for your child and complete the online claim form ASAP (see overleaf for more details). Please don't forget claiming this entitlement helps both your child and the school.

Even if you've applied unsuccessfully before, a number of factors have changes due to Covid, so it is important you have a go and try again so you don't miss out on what should be yours.

If in doubt, please feel free to contact our school office who will be able to advise and assist you with your claim. **Claims need to be made as soon as possible so that you do not miss out over the coming months.**

Thank you for your time and support with this. Together we can make sure our children & families all get the support that they are entitled to.

Yours sincerely,
Nicola Davies

Executive Head Teacher

Is my child eligible for normal Free School Meals / Pupil Premium?

From April 2018 the criteria used to determine which pupils are eligible for free school meals was updated to reflect the introduction of Universal Credit and the phasing out of other income-based benefits.

Transitional protection as part of Universal Credit rollout

To ensure families are not disadvantaged during this rollout, protection arrangements have been put in place.

This means that:

- Any child eligible for free school meals on 31 March 2018 will retain their eligibility until the end of the rollout, December 2023 regardless of whether their circumstances change.
- Any child who becomes eligible during the rollout of universal credit (from 1 April 2018 to December 2023) will retain their eligibility until the end of the rollout, December 2023 regardless of whether their circumstances change.
- Once the rollout of universal credit is complete, no child will lose their entitlement and will continue to be transitionally protected until the end of their current phase of education.

For schools who use Nottinghamshire County Council's eligibility assessment service a child is only eligible to receive a free school meal when a claim for the meal has been made on their behalf and Nottinghamshire County Council has verified their eligibility. NCC will continue to use the DfE Eligibility Checking System (ECS) to determine eligibility for free school meals.

Transitional protection is on an individual child basis and not on a family basis. This means that other children in the family will not automatically be entitled to free school meals. Children must meet the eligibility criteria at the time the application for free school meals is made in order to be entitled.

Universal Credit (provided you have an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400, as assessed by earning from up to three of your most recent assessment periods) Free school meals are available to pupils in receipt of, or whose parents are in receipt of, one or more of the qualifying benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guarantee element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (with no Working Tax Credit) with an annual gross income of no more than £16,190
- Working Tax Credit run-on (paid for the four weeks after the person stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
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How do I claim for normal Free School Meals / Pupil Premium?

To make a claim for **normal Free School Meals (Pupil Premium)** please telephone 0300 500 80 80 and ask for the Grants and Benefits Team or on line at:

https://emsonline.nottscc.gov.uk/CitizenPortal_LIVE/Account/Login?ReturnUrl=%2FCitizenPortal_LIVE%2F

The information needed to register includes:

- personal details (including national insurance number and date of birth) for the parent/carer
 - child's details in full including their date of birth and the school they attend.
- If eligible for free school meals and/or milk the start date will normally be within two working days of parents contacting us and entitlement being verified. Children attending maintained nurseries will also qualify for a free school meal as long as they are receiving funded early years education before and after lunch.