



If your child attends a Camden school, you must apply to us, even if Camden is not your local authority

Frequently asked questions

What happens after I make my application?

We will let you and the school know whether or not your children are entitled to free school meals.

We may also contact you if we need further information to process your application.

How long will it take?

If you're eligible, we will let your child's school know within 10 working days of receiving your application. We will also contact you to confirm your entitlement

Do you need proof of my benefit?

Applications must be made in the name of the person who is receiving the benefit. However you don't have to provide proof of the benefit you are receiving as we will be able to check this against information held by our benefits service and the Department for Education.

If our checks indicate that you are not entitled to free school meals we will let you know.

If you think that you should be entitled we may have to ask for proof of the benefit you are receiving so that we can check that the details we hold are correct.

What if my circumstances change?

Any child eligible for free school meals on 1 April 2018 will keep their free school meals eligibility until 31 March 2022.

Any child who becomes eligible for free school meals during 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2022 will keep their eligibility until 31 March 2022.

Children will keep their eligibility even if your circumstances change between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2022.

If you have been refused free school meals and your circumstances change [contact the free school meals team](#) and we will check your eligibility again.

Backdating your claim

It is important that you apply as soon as possible as we are unable to backdate claims for free school meals to cover unpaid dinner money, or to refund dinner money paid prior to the date of a successful application.

What if I want to apply for another child?

If you have another child starting school in Camden and you want to apply for free school meals for them as well you will need to complete a new on line application or complete a new form. We will then confirm your free school meals eligibility with the school.

What if my child changes school?

If your child is changing schools within Camden

You do not have to reapply for free school meals, just [contact the free school meals team](#) and give details of the new school and we will let the new school know if your child is entitled to free school meals.

If your child is moving to a school outside Camden

Local authorities deal with free school meals in different ways so you should contact the school your child is going to go to and ask them how to apply for free school meals in their local authority.

Do I have to renew my claim?

No, while your child attends a school in Camden you will only have to make one claim for the whole time you are entitled to free school meals.

This is because our benefits service has taken over the administration of free school meals and will check your entitlement against information held by the Department for Education.

We will do this on a regular basis without you having to renew your application every year or having to provide proof of your entitlement.

Who gets free school meals?

All children in reception, year one or year two will be able to receive a free school meal. However you must register your child for free school meals to ensure your child's school receives extra funding.

If your child is in year 3 or above, you or your child must receive one of the following to apply for free school meals:

- Income Support
- Income-based Job Seeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Universal Credit – your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including benefits)
- Child Tax Credit with a taxable income of no more than £16,190 and not in receipt of Working Tax Credit
- The Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit.
- support from the National Asylum Support Service (NASS)

If you receive Working Tax Credit you will not be entitled to free school meals unless you have:

- stopped work in the last 4 weeks; or
- reduced your hours to less than 16 hours in the last 4 weeks

Applications must be made in the name of the person who is receiving the benefit.

If your child is eligible for and getting free school meals at any time before 31 March 2022, they'll remain eligible until this date.

Contact

For more information, please contact the free school meals team:

www.camden.gov.uk/free-school-meals

Address

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Phone

020 7974 5771 (Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm)