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@YewTreeSandwell



Dear Parents/Carers,

### Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility

We know that feeding growing children can be expensive which is one of the reasons we are keen to promote Free School Meals for our families. If you think you meet the eligibility criteria outlined below then please get in touch with our school office immediately so we can help you register so that your child receives free meals while at school.

#### What are the eligibility criteria?

Your child may be entitled to free school meals if:

- your annual income is less than £16,190; and
- you claim Child Tax Credit (**not including Working Tax Credit\***) only; and
- your child is attending a Sandwell School (if your child(ren) doesn't attend a Sandwell School, you will need to apply to the Local Authority which your child(ren) school is in)

**\*Please note you will not qualify for free school meals if you receive any amount of Working Tax Credit. Before applying please check your latest Tax Credit Awards Notice if you are unsure.**

Your child may also qualify for free school meals if you receive any of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit (provided you have an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400, as assessed by earnings from up to three of your most recent assessment periods)
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guarantee element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit

In addition, the following pupils will be protected against losing their free school meals:

- Since 1 April 2018, all existing free school meals claimants have continued to receive free school meals whilst Universal Credit is rolled out. This applies regardless of any change in household circumstances, including if their earnings rise above the threshold during that time. Protections will remain in place until the end of the 2025/26 school year.
- From the start of the 2026/27 school year, the Department for Education will extend entitlement to free school meals to include all children from households in receipt of Universal Credit. It is our intention to end transitional protections alongside this change in threshold, with eligibility for all pupils reverting to whether they meet the eligibility criteria, regardless of whether they were previously protected. We will issue further guidance ahead of September 2026.

### **I don't currently claim free school meals – what does this mean for me?**

If you think you might be eligible for free school meals, speak to a member of the school office team or complete an application form directly with the Local Authority ([www.sandwell.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals)).

The information you provide will be used to check if you are in receipt of a qualifying benefit and, if you are on Universal Credit, that your earnings do not exceed the threshold. If you claim Universal Credit, your earnings will be assessed from up to three of your last Universal Credit assessment periods.

If you are eligible, we will be notified. Your child will receive free school meals and the school will receive extra funding called Pupil Premium.

### **I am currently claiming free school meals – what does this mean for me?**

If you're currently claiming free school meals, but now don't meet the criteria, your child may not get a free school meal. However, the school will continue to receive Pupil Premium funding for any child who has been registered for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

### **Where can I get more information?**

If you need any further information, please speak to a member of school staff or the Local Authority. You can also visit the free school meal website: [www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals](http://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals)

*Did you know ... just registering your child for Free School Meals means that the school gets extra money?*

*This means we can provide extra support to help your child at school!*

The Government offers schools funding called Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) so that they can provide resources and support to ensure all children achieve equally as well regardless of their family income.

**For every child registered as Free School Meals Yew Tree Primary gets £1,515 this year!**

This funding helps children access support and activities that enrich their lives and help them to thrive academically, socially and emotionally. This is why it is so important that we receive this funding to continue offering these wonderful resources for all children at Yew Tree Primary School.

**If your child is eligible for free school meals but still wants to bring a packed lunch, please do still register as the school will still receive additional funding regardless of whether your child actually has school meals.**

Pupil Premium money can support the school in various ways including:

**IPADS – to increase numbers of IPADS available.**

**AFTERSCHOOL CLUBS & MUSIC TUITION – helping subsidise the cost so that all can attend both clubs and instrumental tuition**

**RESIDENTIALS – reducing the actual cost to families to make it accessible to all**

**EXTRA SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN - targeted Maths and English intervention.**

**EXTRA SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN – for improved self-esteem and self confidence**

**EXTRA SUPPORT FOR PARENTS/CARERS**

**CHILDREN IN RECEPTION, YEAR 1 OR YEAR 2 RECEIVE A FREE SCHOOL MEAL REGARDLESS OF INCOME BUT WE NEED YOU TO REGISTER TO RECEIVE THIS FUNDING**