



2024/2025 Free School Meals & School Essentials Grant Application for Newport Schools Important Information for Parents / Carers

Universal Primary Free School Meals

All primary aged pupils are entitled to receive Free School Meals.

Families of children attending Primary School do not need to apply for the school meal offer as they will be automatically able to claim this at their school. **However, please note that families on low incomes may be eligible to claim the School Essentials grant payment and additional funding for their school, please see below.**

Free School Meals for Low Income Families

If you are on a low income and meet the eligibility criteria as below, you are advised to make an application for Free School Meals as this could entitle you to a School Essentials Grant payment plus additional funding for your school.

You **MUST** complete all sections on the application form and sign the declaration. Incomplete forms will result in a delay of any Free School Meals or School Essentials Grant payment whilst we contact you to gain the missing information.

Application can be made online via the Newport City Council website. Paper forms are also available upon request.

ELIGIBILITY – Pupils will be eligible for a Free School Meal and a School Essentials Grant if parents/carers are in receipt of one of the following benefits:

- Income Support or Income Based Jobseekers Allowance
 - Income Related Employment Support Allowance
 - Child Tax Credit (the annual income must be less than £16,190 for the household)
- NOTE: if you are in receipt of Working Tax Credit, you will NOT be eligible to receive Free School Meals nor a School Essentials Grant**
- Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit
 - Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
 - Universal Credit, provided the household has an annualised net earned income of no more than £7400.

When you make your claim for Free School Meals, your Local Authority will check your eligibility using the eligibility checking system. This process works by looking at a claimant's earnings for up to three of the most recent assessment periods, starting with the most recent and working back. If we need further information, we will contact you.

***ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE NEEDED** – if you answered yes to any of the following questions, you will need to provide documents in support of your claim:

- **DO YOU HAVE NO RECOURSE TO PUBLIC FUNDS BASED UPON YOUR IMMIGRATION STATUS** – You will need to provide a copy of the front and back of your Biometric Residency Card (BRP)
- **DO YOU HAVE EU PRE SETTLED STATUS AND CANNOT CLAIM ANY BENEFITS** (such as Universal Credit) – You will need to provide a copy of the letter from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) or Job Centre Plus (JCP) which states that you are not eligible for welfare benefits.

If you have lost the DWP/JCP letter, you can authorise Newport City Council to contact the DWP/JCP on your behalf to obtain a copy of this letter. By signing the declaration on your application, you are agreeing to Newport City Council accessing this information in support of your claim.

If you have EUPSS and believe that you cannot get benefits and have never applied for any, please attend the EU Drop in, Newport Central Library & Museum, Floor 1/reference section, John Frost Square, Newport NP20 1PA on Wednesdays between 9AM and 4PM (please note that drop-ins will not always be available in July & August 2024)

Renewal claims

If your children are currently entitled to Free School Meals and attending a Newport School, there will be no need for you to submit a further application. We will be able to check your on-going eligibility for Free School Meals and the School Essentials Grant without the need for you to complete a new form (unless we contact you under separate cover).

Transitional Protection

Due to changes made by Welsh Government, Transitional Protection ended on 31.12.2023.

Any new Free School Meals awards made from 01.01.24 will not receive Transitional Protection. If your circumstances change, entitlement to Free School Meals will end if you no longer meet the eligibility criteria.

Pupils already in receipt of Free School Meals prior to 01.01.2024 will have their eligibility protected until the child comes to the end of their current phase of education i.e. primary/secondary school.

For any Year 6 pupils moving from Primary to Secondary School in September 2024, Transitional Protection will now end. We will do an eligibility check and if the eligibility criteria is no longer met, entitlement to Free School Meals will cease at the end of the School Year, Year 6.

School Essentials Grant 2024/2025

The grant for the academic year from September 2024 opens from 01st July 2024.

Pupils who are eligible to a Free School Meal based on the eligibility criteria above may also be entitled to a School Essentials Grant if they are entering reception class in primary school, years 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10 or 11 or if they are in a special school, special needs resource unit or pupil referral unit and are aged 4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14 or 15.

The funding is also available to all looked after children of compulsory school age.

Pupils with no recourse to public funds entering Reception, Years 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10 and 11 in the 2024/2025 school year can also be considered for this funding.

The School Essentials Grant is to provide assistance to families on low incomes for the purchase of:

- School uniform including coats and shoes;
- School sports kit including footwear;
- Uniform for enrichment activities, including but not limited to, scouts; guides; cadets; martial arts; sports; performing arts or dance;
- Equipment e.g. school bags and stationary;
- Specialist equipment where new curriculum activities begin such as design and technology;
- Laptops or tablets; and
- Equipment for out of school hours trips such as outdoor learning e.g. waterproofs.

Please contact your school to find out if equipment is available before purchasing any.

A payment of £125 per pupil will be made for all qualifying school years with the exception of pupils entering Year 7 who will each receive a payment of £200.

Please provide your bank details on your application in order for this payment to be made. Payment has to be paid into a bank account. We are unable to make payments into a Post Office account. Failure to provide this information could result in a delay in issuing this payment to you.

Applications for the School Essentials Grant can only be considered for pupils attending schools within the Newport Local Authority and only one grant payment can be claimed in any one academic year.

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

CHANGES IN YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES - It is **your responsibility** to notify the Housing Benefits Team of any changes to financial/family circumstances. Failure to notify the Housing Benefits Team could result in you being charged the full cost of any school meals taken by your Children from the date your circumstances changed. You may also have to pay back any School Essentials Grant payment that you received but were not entitled to due to your failure to disclose important information.

If your children move to a different Newport school during the school year, please contact the Housing Benefits Team so that we can amend your award and inform the new school of their entitlement.

You cannot make a claim for children who are accessing a part-time nursery place.

DECIDED NOT TO APPLY?

The Welsh Government gives an extra grant for every child that is entitled to and claims free school meals (based upon the eligibility criteria for lower income families). It can be an extra bonus for your child's school so we would urge you to make a claim.

School meals offer a healthy option with significant nutritional benefits and recent evidence suggests that having a healthy meal at lunchtime can assist in improving a child's performance and concentration during the day.

For any queries regarding Free School Meals or the School Essentials Grant, contact:

- telephone number (01633) 987754 or
- email: freeschoolmeals@newport.gov.uk

This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg