



Dear Parent/Carers,

Free School Meals Applications

There is now a new online system for you to apply for free school meals. Thurrock Council Awards and Benefits Department will not accept paper claim forms for free school meals after **31 January 2017**.

Applications can be made online by visiting:

<https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/school-meals/free-school-meals> Simply login to our My Account services, select 'Education and childcare', 'Free school meals' and then 'Apply online'. A family can create an account if they don't already have one. All they will need is a valid personal email address.

If a family does not have access to the internet at home, they can either visit their local library or Thurrock Council area offices. It is considered that this new way of submitting an application will make the whole process much quicker, without the need for you to complete the fast track forms.

You should apply if you receive either:

- Income Support
- Income based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income related Employment & Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credits-provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit & have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190
- Universal Credit-provided your total net earnings are no more than £616.66 each month or £7,400 per annum, starting from 1 April 2018
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Support under Part VI of Immigration & Asylum Act 1999

Applying for free school meals for your child is very important, as it not only means they get a warm nutritious meal for free but they are also entitled to other benefits such as help with swimming lessons, music tuition and some trips. Even if your child is in key stage 1 and already receives a free school meal it is important to apply as they will receive other benefits if they are eligible. No stigma will be attached to your child all applications are completely confidential.

If you have any questions or need any help in any way, please contact the school office either in person or by phone and we will be happy to assist you.

Yours sincerely,

Mr M Jones
Principal

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