

December 2018

Dear Parent/Carer

Reminder of changes to Free School Meal Eligibility under Universal Credit

This letter, with all of the information provided, was originally sent out to parents/carers in April. We want to ensure that our students are receiving the appropriate entitlements for their family circumstances, which is the purpose of this reminder. All of this information has been sent on behalf of Redcar & Cleveland Local Authority. Should you have any queries relating to the content, please contact the Free School Meals department on 01642 771106. Application and/or Change if Circumstance forms are available for collection from Academy Reception or via our website <http://www.bydales.outwood.com/free-school-meals>

The eligibility criteria for free school meals have been changed. This letter explains the changes and how they might affect you.

What are the new eligibility criteria?

Children are entitled to receive free school meals if they or their parents or guardians receive any of the benefits below.

- Universal Credit, provided they have an annual net earned income not exceeding £7,400 (£616.67 per month)
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guarantee element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit, provided they are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190, as assessed by HMRC
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit

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, submit a claim to your school or local authority. Your school should have a form you can use. 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, your school will be notified. Your child will receive free school meals and the school will receive extra funding.

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

From 1 April 2018, all existing free school meals claimants will continue to receive free school meals whilst Universal Credit is rolled out. This will apply even if their earnings rise above the new threshold during that time.

- In addition, any child gaining eligibility for free school meals after 1 April 2018 will be protected against losing free school meals during the Universal Credit rollout period.

•Once Universal Credit is fully rolled out, any existing claimants that no longer meet the above eligibility criteria at that point will continue to receive free school meals until the end of their current phase of education (i.e. primary or secondary).

Transitional Protection applies to all children whether eligible through legacy benefits or Universal Credit. Transitional Protections are put in place on an individual child basis, not on a family basis. This means that younger children will not become entitled to free school meals simply because their older sibling is in receipt of transitional protection. The younger child must meet the eligibility criteria at the time the application is made to become eligible for free school meals.

The Universal Credit rollout is currently expected to complete in March 2022.

Where can I get more information?

If you need any further information, please speak to the local authority. You can also visit the free school meal website: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>

Yours faithfully



Stephanie Nicholas
Principal's PA/Office Manager