



Hanley Castle High School

and Sixth Form Centre

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Headteacher: Mrs Lindsey Cooke

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Dear Parent/Carer(s)

I am delighted that you have chosen Hanley Castle High School for the next stage of your son/daughter's education.

During these current difficult economic conditions many families are facing challenging financial times due to the downturn in the economy and Government spending cuts. If your family's circumstances are difficult, or have changed recently, you may be eligible to claim free school meals for your child. This is a simple process which many parents have already completed.

Your child may be eligible for a **free school meal** if you are in receipt of **Income Support, an Income based Job Seekers Allowance, support under Part IV of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, Child Tax Credit (provided you have an annual income that does not exceed £16,190), an Employment and Support Allowance or a State Pension Credit Guarantee.**

Please see the attached question and answer sheet from the Local Authority for further information. An application form can be obtained from school or electronically from www.worcestershire.gov.uk

You may also have seen in the news that every child who is entitled to free school meals will attract a 'Pupil Premium'. This money will be used by the school to provide the very best possible standard of education for your child, including some opportunities which the school might otherwise struggle to provide in these tough financial times.

I very much hope that the information contained in this letter is helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact me at school if you require any further clarification or guidance.

Yours faithfully

Lindsey Cooke
Headteacher

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Who can apply for free school meals?

Free School Meals can only be awarded if you or your partner are claiming either;

- 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.

[Apply Online](#) -

http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20062/schools/684/applying_for_free_school_meals

What is pupil premium?

Pupil premium is extra money paid direct to schools for each child who is eligible for free school meals. It is used to support your child's education. Please apply for free schools meals if you are eligible so your school gets this money.

Who qualifies for universal infant Free school meals?

From September 2014 the government are introducing universal infant free school meals for all pupils in Reception, Years 1 and 2. In order for your child's school to recognise who is eligible for universal meals and who qualifies for free school meals for funding purposes we would encourage all parents to register with their school by completing an application form even if the child does not wish to receive a meal.

How do I apply for free school meals and / or universal free school meals?

If your child is in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2, an application form can be obtained from your child's school.

If your child is in Year 3 or above, you can complete an online Free School Meals Application Form.



What happens after I have completed my application?

- Your eligibility for Free School Meals and / or Universal Free School Meals will be checked by your child's school
- If we receive your free school meals application form, eligibility will be checked online
- If you qualify for a Free School Meal under the benefit criteria, a letter will be sent to you confirming your Free School Meal Award
- Your child or children's school will also be informed.
- Contact your child's school to find out how your child's lunch will be served
- Free School Meals cannot be granted to any child until either the school or ourselves have received a correctly completed form
- Entitlement to free school meals cannot be backdated
- Schools will know if your child qualifies for a Universal Infants Free School Meal

What happens if my circumstances change?

Your child/ren will continue to receive Free School Meals until the end of the Universal Credit rollout period currently scheduled to end in March 2022.

This will apply even if your earnings rise above the new threshold or if you stop being entitled to Universal Credit.

Once Universal Credit is fully rolled out, your child will keep their free school meal until the end of their current phase of education for example primary or secondary school.

What do I do to maintain my claim for free school meals?

Your claim for Free School Meals will be reviewed on a regular basis. We use an online Free School Meals eligibility checking system provided by the Department for Education to confirm your entitlement.

Please note the online checking system only confirms or denies your eligibility to claim Free School Meals: it does not give us any other information. If we cannot confirm your entitlement through this process we will contact you to ask you to provide up-to-date evidence of the benefit you receive.

Will I need to re-apply if my child changes school?

Free meal entitlement will automatically follow your child to the next stage of their education (i.e., in September) and the new school will be advised of this.

The Free School Meals Team will need to be advised if your child transfers to another school at any other time or for any other reason on 01905 678154

