



09 October 2018

Dear Parents/Carers

### **Free School Meals & Pupil Premium Funding**

We are writing to inform you that there have been changes to free school meal guidance and legislation. The free school meal criteria has changed due to the introduction of Universal Credit and the phasing out of other income-based benefits. We would like to encourage applications for free school meal eligibility checking.

Free school meals are available to pupils in receipt of, or whose parents/carers are in receipt of, one of more of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit (providing 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 "Guaranteed" Element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you are 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 as follows:

- From 1<sup>st</sup> 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<sup>st</sup> 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 eligibility criteria at that point (because they are earning above the threshold or are no longer a recipient of Universal Credit) will continue to receive free school meals until the end of their current phase of education. The Universal Credit rollout is currently expected to complete in March 2022.



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We would encourage all parents/carers to complete the attached application form if you meet any of the criteria listed above and return the form to your child's form tutor by 18<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

Where students are entitled to free school meals, the pupil will also be eligible for Pupil Premium funding, which can be used to support your child in their education, including providing funds for materials, resources, trips, etc. Therefore, it is in your interest to apply for funding wherever possible.

I attach additionally some frequently asked questions and answers, for your assistance.

Please do not hesitate to contact your Head of Year if you have any queries relating to this letter.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Janina Villalta  
Head of School, Staffing & Operations

Enc  
Babcocks Application Form  
Frequently Asked Questions Sheet



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Listed below are a couple of common questions and answers to help you:

*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 the Academy on the attached application form. 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, the 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?*

*Most people will not be affected by the new criteria. If you are currently claiming free school meals, but don't meet the new criteria, your child will continue to receive free school meals until the end of the Universal Credit rollout period. This will apply even if your earnings rise above the new threshold or if you stop being entitled to Universal Credit. The rollout period is currently scheduled to end in March 2022. Once Universal Credit is fully rolled out, your child will keep their free school meal until the end of their current phase of education, i.e. primary or secondary.*

*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: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-freeschool-meals>*



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