



FREE SCHOOL MEALS AND TRAVEL ASSISTANCE

Low income families in receipt of Free School Meals or the Maximum level of Working Tax Credit can obtain travel assistance if their child is attending any of the three nearest qualifying schools to their address and the school is more than 2 miles and less than 6 miles from home. A uniform grant of up to £100 every two years is also available for those in receipt of Free School Meals. It is important to claim for Free School Meals as not only will it benefit the family but also the school.

Will my child qualify for Free School Meals?

- To get free school meals you must be in receipt of one of the following qualifying benefits:
- Income Support (IS) or Child Tax Credit
- Income-Based Job Seeker's Allowance (IB JSA) or
- Employment Support Allowance (Income Related) (ESA)(IRA) or
- Guaranteed Element of Pension Credit
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Working Tax Credit 'run-on' payment (paid for four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
- Universal Credit

Where a parent is entitled to Working Tax Credit during the four-week period immediately after their employment ceases, or after they start to work less than 16 hours per week, their children are entitled to free school meals.

How do I apply for Free School Meals?

You can apply by telephone – call Dorset direct on 01305 221090 or an online application form can be found at: Dorset County Council: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/education-and-training/schools-and-learning/at-school/free-school-meals>. There is an 'Apply Now' button prominently displayed on the page.

How long will a Free School Meals award last?

The award will remain in place for as long as your child continues to attend a Dorset school and you continue to receive one of the qualifying benefits. You are required to notify of any changes to your benefit status which may affect your continued entitlement. You do not need to re-apply every year; automatic checks will be made to check the information given on your application.

My children attend different schools

The award is made for the family – you can include all your children on one form, as long as they all attend schools in Dorset.

How do I apply for a uniform grant and/or transport assistance?

Once eligibility for Free School Meals has been confirmed, an application form for uniform grant and/or transport assistance can be obtained from the school. To ensure you receive the Uniform Grant before the start of the new school year, we must receive the signed forms before the closing date of 15th July 2025. Any forms received after this date will be processed in September.

I do not want the school to know my financial situation

The arrangements for checking benefit evidence do not disclose how much you receive or even which Benefit you receive. The school will not be given any information regarding your financial situation.