

Free School Meals

The Council provides two types of free school meals to children attending a school within the Cheshire East Borough.

1. Free school meals for infants

Children at school and in reception class, year 1 or year 2 (key stage 1) can have free school meals. This is called universal infant free school meals (UIFSM). You don't need to claim for UIFSM, just contact your child's school.

2. Income related free school meals (IRFSM)

You can claim free school meals for each child who attends school in Cheshire East if you receive one of these benefits:

- Universal Credit with no earned income or with net monthly earnings less than £616.67
- Income Support
- Income based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income related Employment Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit - as long as you have a yearly household income of less than £16,190 (as assessed by HM Revenue and Customs) and do not get Working Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit run-on (paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)

Pupils attending independent or private schools or further education colleges are not eligible for free school meals.

Cheshire East Council suggests that you do make a claim for free school meals even if your child is in key stage 1 as the school can claim additional funding (pupil premium) for new equipment and resources.

You can apply for nursery-age children if they attend before and after lunch sessions at a local authority nursery school, nursery class or an Academy nursery if it has the same Ofsted number as the primary school.

Phone 0300 123 5012 for further information and help.

Claim for free school meals

You can do this by [clicking here](#)

You will be taken to the parent portal to register or log in first.

You will need your National Insurance number and your child's date of birth to complete the form. The form will take 10 minutes to complete.

We use the Government eligibility checker to confirm your entitlement. Successful claims can begin the same day. If your claim is not successful or you need to send more proof we will contact you by phone or email, your entitlement will only begin once this information is provided. If you feel that a deadline has passed and you haven't heard from us, you can call the Contact Centre team on the telephone number at the bottom of the page to discuss your application status.

We cannot backdate claims for Free School Meals to cover unpaid dinner money, or to refund any dinner money paid prior to the date of a successful application.

Appealing against the free school meals eligibility criteria

The qualifying criteria for free school meals is set by Central Government, not Cheshire East Council. Any change to the criteria must be raised via your Member of Parliament.

For further information about free school meals please visit the Cheshire East Council website [found here](#).