

Free School Meals and Uniform Allowances 2024-25

We are getting ready to launch applications for Free School Meals and Uniform Allowances for the school year beginning September 2024 - and hope the following will be helpful as you plan your New Intake meetings with parents.

Applications will be opening soon on EA Connect. We expect the system to be operational from the week commencing 17 June 2024.

More details will be available in due course, but we would ask you to share the information in this newsletter with parents ahead of the launch.

Proof of Benefit Letters

Parents/guardians in receipt of any of the benefits listed below, will need to upload a Proof of Benefit Letter with their application.

Qualifying social security benefits:

- Income Support
- Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income Related Employment and Support Allowance
- Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit

A Proof of Benefit Letter can be requested by [visiting this website](#). As it can take at least five days to obtain the letter, applicants are advised to request it now in advance of the launch.

We ask you to remind your parent community of this requirement - **as an application cannot be processed until we receive all supporting documentation for the applicant.**

Tax Credits or Universal Credit

Important update for Universal Credit recipients - the Department of Education has announced an **interim uplift** in the annual net household income threshold for eligibility for people who receive Universal Credit, **from £14,000 to £15,000.**

We would be grateful if you could advise your parents of this change to the 2024-25 application process.

If parents/guardians receive Tax Credits or Universal Credit, they do not need the Proof of Benefit Letter. **However, they will still need to upload evidence of their Tax Credits or Universal Credit benefits.**

If parents/guardians have difficulty in obtaining a Proof of Benefit Letter, or do not understand how to provide evidence of their Universal Credit or Tax Credits, **their local Social Security Agency office Digital Hub** will have staff on hand to help them obtain the correct evidence to support their application.



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Social Media Toolkit

In order to help us promote awareness of Free School Meals and Uniform Allowance applications for September 2024, we have developed a social media toolkit which you may wish to use on your own communication channels.

The toolkit - [which can be accessed using this link](#) - includes graphics and text with key information, as well as a schedule of suggested dates for sharing the content on your channels.

Pupil Lists

You may wish to consider obtaining a list of 2023/24 eligible pupils from AnyComms+ so that you can encourage those eligible parents/guardians to submit an early application this year.

If you require further information about accessing Pupil Lists, please email the dedicated email address for schools at mealsanduniformschools@eani.org.uk



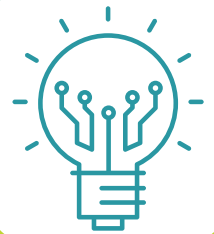
We are very grateful to you for your continued support throughout the academic year, particularly with sharing key information and updates with your school communities.

Extra help for parents/guardians on the EA website:

- FAQs
- Eligibility criteria
- Supporting documents guidance
- Helpdesk contact details



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Uniform Allowance



Further Assistance - Free School Meals and Uniform Allowance Helpdesk

The FSMU Helpdesk is available from Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm by telephone on 028 9041 8044 or email mealsanduniform@eani.org.uk