



Important
changes
Please read

Pupil & Student Services

Free school meals 2011/12

In 2009 Wolverhampton City Council was chosen to run a two year project offering free school meals to families on low incomes who receive Working Tax Credit. Wolverhampton is the only Local Authority in the country approved to offer this valuable benefit to all children and young people until July 2012.



Free school meals 2011/12

Thank you for requesting further information about free school meals. This booklet explains all about the value and importance of this benefit to you, your child(ren)'s school and the City.

The Council is encouraging parents and carers whose children are entitled to receive Free School Meals to register, either at the Civic Centre or at their child(ren)'s school. Once registered, there is no commitment for children to eat a school meal every day, but by registering, parents can ensure that schools get their maximum funding, and **save money themselves**.

If you receive one of the following: Income Support, Income-based Jobseekers Allowance, Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit, Income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Child Tax Credit or Working Tax Credit (with an income of less than £16,190*) or you are receiving support from NASS, you could be entitled to claim free meals - don't miss the opportunity to **save money** and make sure your child(ren)'s school receives all the support and funding it needs - **register today!** Lots of help is available, ask your child(ren)'s school or the Council for further details.

If you are entitled to receive a free school meal, we would urge you to register. Once registered, children don't have to eat school meals, but the **savings for a family with two children at school taking a free meal every day add up to almost £800** a year!**

For every child that doesn't register, the school misses out on important funding from the Government and Council, and the number of children registered to receive a free school meal also affects how the school is evaluated in terms of exam results and OFSTED reports.

We have enclosed some information about meals provided by Wolverhampton City Council's Catering Services, and menus are available on request from your child(ren)'s school. If you would like to receive further details, or would like a taste of school meals for yourself, please let us know!

Jo Smith
School Meals Development Officer

* April 2011 – 2012

** Recommended charges for school meals September 2011 – July 2012

Help yourself... help your school!

HELP YOURSELF...

A family with 2 children at primary school taking Free School Meals saves £20 a week*; over a typical school year, savings amount to over £760. With 2 children at secondary school taking Free School Meals, the annual savings increase to almost £800!

Registration also entitles many children and young people to extra benefits such as free accommodation on residential school trips, free milk, and in some cases, free transport to school.**



You do not have to be the actual parent of the child(ren) to make a claim, as long as you claim for the child(ren) in your benefit payments and you receive Child Benefit for them.



* Recommended charges for school meals
September 2011 – July 2012

** Families receiving Working Tax Credit are
not entitled to these extra benefits

Menus for primary, secondary and special schools have been carefully designed to ensure that an average school lunch meets the statutory standards - providing at least one third of a child's daily needs for energy, protein and other vital nutrients such as vitamins and minerals, while keeping the amounts of salt, sugar and potentially harmful fats to a minimum.


HELP YOUR SCHOOL!

A great deal of the funding that comes from the Government for schools is based on the number of pupils who are registered for free school meals. By registering to receive free school meals, you will be helping the funding of your child(ren)'s school.

Registering to receive free school meals is important (even if you choose not to eat school meals) because:

- The amount of money your child(ren)'s school receives is affected by the number of children who are registered to receive a free school meal;
- The way your child(ren)'s school is compared to other schools is also affected by the number of children who are registered to receive a free school meal;*
- The funding of projects in Wolverhampton could also be affected by the number of children who are registered to receive a free school meal.

* Additional criteria applies



We hope that you will support your school by encouraging your child(ren) to take advantage of the tasty and affordable food on offer - together we can make a difference.

Who is entitled to receive free school meals?

CHECKLIST

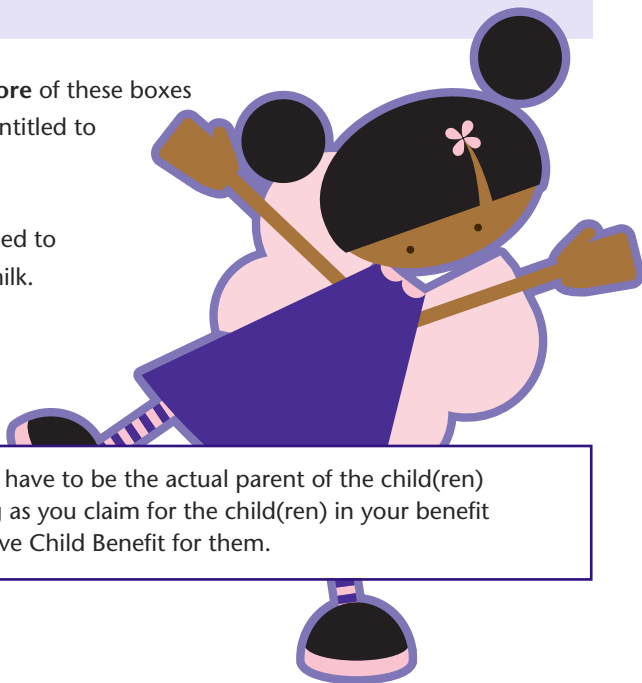
- ✓ My child, or children, are at school in Wolverhampton* **and**

I receive:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit **and** my annual income (as assessed by the Inland Revenue) is **less than £16,190** (April 2011 – 2012)
- Working Tax Credit **and** my annual income (as assessed by the Inland Revenue) is **less than £16,190** (April 2011 – 2012)
- Support from NASS

If you have ticked **one or more** of these boxes your child, or children, are entitled to receive free school meals.

Your child **may** also be entitled to other benefits such as free milk.
Ask us for more details!



* **Remember:** You do not have to be the actual parent of the child(ren) to make a claim, as long as you claim for the child(ren) in your benefit payments and you receive Child Benefit for them.

What do I need to do now?

If you are currently registered to receive free school meals - don't worry, this booklet is for information only, it does not affect your right to claim free school meals.

From April 2011, we will automatically renew existing applications using a secure Government website. If we cannot confirm your eligibility, we will contact you for paper proof of the benefits you receive.

If you are not currently registered, but believe that you are entitled to receive free school meals, we would encourage you to apply as soon as possible. Once registered, there is no commitment for your child(ren) to eat a school meal every day.

HOW DO I REGISTER FOR FREE SCHOOL MEALS?

Applications should be made to Wolverhampton Local Authority (or directly to the school if it is a Foundation School).

To enable your application to be processed as quickly as possible, please ensure that you have filled in the appropriate details on the application form.

In most cases, you won't have to provide paper proof of benefit as we will use a secure government website to check your eligibility.*

If we cannot confirm your eligibility, we will ask you to provide paper proof of benefit.

Please see the table overleaf for what evidence you will need to provide with your application if we cannot confirm your eligibility.



* Applications made to a foundation school will still require paper proof of benefit.

You will need to provide the following evidence* with your application if we cannot confirm your eligibility using a secure Government website:

If you receive:	You will need to provide:
Income Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefit Letter (all pages) • Bank Statement with 'IS' / 'Income Support' printed by the transaction (not older than 6 months)
Income Based Job Seeker's Allowance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefit Letter (all pages) (not older than 6 months)
Income-related Employment and Support Allowance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefit Letter (all pages) (not older than 6 months)
Support from NASS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ID card of all family members; confirming Asylum Seeker Status, Name, Date of Birth and Address of all family members; or • NASS reference number and the name of the Authority providing your support
Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefit Letter (all pages) (not older than 6 months)
Child Tax Credit <i>(income less than £16,190)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TC602 (dated within the current tax year)
Working Tax Credit** <i>(income less than £16,190)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TC602 (dated within the current tax year)

* If this evidence is not provided, when required, your application will be delayed and you may be required to pay for your child(ren)'s school meals.

** If you are in receipt of Working Tax Credit, you will need to provide paper proof. Unfortunately, the secure Government website does not hold this information.

School meals are hot news...

...and the hot news is that school meals are good for you!

In Wolverhampton, school meals aren't just healthy, but the fact that the charge for a typical two-course dinner at primary school is just £2.00 (£2.10 in secondary school)* means that they're **good value** too!

Even before Jamie Oliver hit the headlines, Wolverhampton schools were offering healthy lunches to our city's children and young people.

From September 2006, new Government standards were introduced across the country. This means that what's on the menu at your child(ren)'s school is wholesome and nutritious, with plenty of **fresh fruit and vegetables** and less chips and burgers. **We all want the best for our children.**

The new school meals standards mean that all schools offer a **healthy, balanced meal option** at lunchtime - with a **variety of hot meals**, and at secondary schools, healthy snacks such as jacket potatoes, salads and sandwiches. **A variety of drinks** including water, milk and pure fruit juices are also available - safeguarding our children's teeth, as well as feeding their minds and bodies.



There is **plenty of choice** on the menu and **it's all good for you!** We have developed our menu in line with the national standards, and have incorporated suggestions by children and young people, their families and staff at the school - there is something healthy for everyone at **fantastic value for money!**

* recommended charges for school meals, September 2011 – July 2012.

What do you get for your money?

Unlike shops or local restaurants, schools aren't in it for the money - the school meals service doesn't operate to make profit out of its customers, just to provide good food at affordable prices that suits most tastes and ensures our children and young people are given the best start in life to support their health, wellbeing and education!

Primary schools offer lunch at a price of just £2.00* for a two-course meal (hot or cold) with a drink. In some of the city's schools, children sit down to a family-style service of 'Dish of the Day' and a sweet. Dishes include roast dinners with all the trimmings, sausages with onion gravy, apple crumble and fruity chocolate bake & custard.

At **secondary school** 'cash cafeterias', the Free School Meal entitlement of £2.10* will buy a variety of meals, including 'Dish of the Day'; (typically, chicken curry, spaghetti bolognese or roast dinner with all the trimmings) or a jacket potato with cheese, beans or coleslaw, fresh fruit, yoghurt, assorted hot sweets and a selection of drinks.

Rewarding healthy choices
'Points' may be earned at schools operating a 'cashless' system, to reward healthy choices.

For more details, contact your child(ren)'s school.



Fortnightly menus on offer at most of our City's schools feature a range of familiar dishes that children look forward to enjoying with friends

Fresh fruit, bread, milk and chilled water are available daily in all schools.

Menus are available to download from www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/catering

Please note: Prices and example menus shown are for schools using the Council's Catering Services. Some secondary schools use alternative suppliers. Prices and menus may vary. Please contact your child(ren)'s school for further information.

* Recommended charges for school meals, September 2011 – July 2012.

Statutory nutrient-based standards for school lunches came into effect for primary schools in September 2008 and for secondary and special schools in September 2009.

The nutrient-based standards are as follows:

- **Recommended levels for:**
 - Energy (kcal)
- **Minimum limits for:**
 - Carbohydrate
 - Fibre

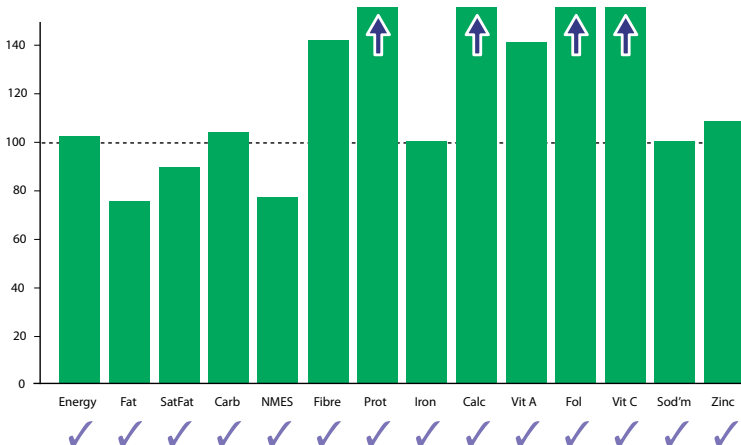
(Non Starch Polysaccharide)

 - Protein
 - Iron
 - Calcium
 - Zinc
 - Vitamins A and C
 - Folate
- **Maximum limits for:**
 - Fat & Saturated Fat
 - NMES (non - milk extrinsic sugars)
 - Sodium

“Nutrient-based standards apply to an average school lunch, and relate to overall provision rather than individual consumption.”¹

Further details about all the statutory standards and guidance about all aspects of food and drink in schools may be found at www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk

¹ Ref.: A guide to introducing the Government’s food-based and nutrient-based standards for school lunches (School Food Trust, December 2007).



For further information on free school meals,
please contact:

Pupil & Student Services

Call: **01902 554128**

or visit: www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals

For general queries and additional information
about the menus, special dietary requirements or
comments about food in school, please contact:

Catering Services

Call: **01902 555223/555201**

or

Jo Smith

(School Meals Development Officer)

Call: **01902 554283**

or visit: www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/catering

To maintain a healthy weight, we need to both eat well and
move more. Many families are making changes that will help
them live healthier and longer lives.

Visit www.nhs.uk/Change4Life or call **0300 123 4567**
for more information.

Wolverhampton City
Primary Care Trust

