

Rowlands Gill Primary School

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Dear Parents / Carers

Free School meal entitlement due to Covid 19.

Sadly, Covid 19 has affected everyone and as a school we know that some of our families may have faced a change of circumstances over the last few months.

As such, it may be that your family are entitled to apply for free school meals. I have listed below the criteria which you can check. You can also use the information from Gateshead Council's Free School Meals page which is <https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/7433/Free-school-meals>. This has an online application form so it can be done from home. Alternatively, if you would like school to provide a paper copy please contact us.

Who can get a free school meal?

Your child will qualify for free school meals if you meet the following criteria:

- you or your partner receive child benefit (for the child you are applying for), and
- the child is in full time education, under 19 years of age, and
- the child attends a local authority school or sixth form (but not a sixth form college). If your child attends nursery, attendance must be full-time and your child must attend before and after lunch in a nursery run by Gateshead Council.

You and your partner must be in receipt of one of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance (JSA - IB)
- Guarantee Pension Credit
- Income Related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA Income Related)
- Child Tax Credit - but not Working Tax Credit - and your income for Tax Credit purposes must be less than £16,190.00 (details are shown on your Tax Credit award notice)
- Working Tax Credit Run-on
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Universal Credit and your net earned family income is less than £7,400.

Receipt of one of the above benefits will be checked with the relevant government departments (HMRC, DWP and Home Office) and this may be done via the Eligibility Checking Service. By signing the declaration on the application form, you are giving your consent for the Local Authority to check your eligibility through this service.

Why should I apply for a free school meal?

Even if you are having financial difficulties you shouldn't have to worry about your child getting the nourishment they need to grow strong and healthy. Did you know:

- you can claim free school meals if you receive child benefit and any of the benefits mentioned below
- it could save you just under £400 a year
- the school menu is varied to cater for all tastes and uses quality ingredients from local suppliers.
- it's quick and easy to apply - you can even do this over the phone
- you don't need to provide any evidence
- no one will know your child is getting free school meals on the basis of your income.

Extra funding for your child's school

For every valid application for free school meals, not only will your child receive a healthy, nutritious meal, but we can also claim:

£1,320 per pupil in reception to year 6

We can claim this funding each year for six years, which can really help to provide the best environment to support your child's learning and development.

If you qualify, we will be informed and means-tested free school meals will be available immediately.

Please be aware that if you are awarded free school meals it will only be backdated to the date Gateshead Council free school meals section received the form not when it was handed in at school. Applying online is the quickest method.

If you have any queries, please contact the school office on 01207 549359.

Yours faithfully



Mrs L Clarke
Headteacher