



# PotteriesGold

## FREE SCHOOL MEALS Do your kids qualify?

With Marcus Rashford's high-profile campaign prompting a U-turn from the Government, help feeding the family over the Christmas holidays may be on the way for some low-income households.

We don't know the details of what schemes will run locally, but help is often targeted on families entitled to Free School Meals.

But many families who could claim these don't.

If you are entitled to Free School Meals, you *should* claim them. There could be extra help for you in term-time and the holidays - and your child's school gains extra funding too.

You qualify for Free School Meals if you get certain means-tested benefits, like Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or ESA and Pension Credit.

And many working families could claim too.

### FREE SCHOOL MEALS IF YOU GET TAX CREDITS

You can get Free School Meals for your kids if you get **Child Tax Credit (CTC)** and your earnings (before tax) are **less than £16,190 per year**. However, if you also get **Working Tax Credit (WTC)**, you *won't* qualify for Free School Meals...



Jaswinder and Hannah job-share, working 18 hours per week each, and are both paid £15,000 per annum. Both have two school-age children.

Hannah is a lone parent. As long as she works 16 hours a week, as a lone parent she can get Working Tax Credit as well as Child Tax Credit. Hannah gets £119.14 CTC plus £30.99 WTC each week but, because she gets WTC, her children don't get Free School Meals.

Jaswinder has a partner, who is out-of-work at present. As a couple, they must work at least 24 hours per week between them to get Working Tax Credit. As they don't, they will only get Child Tax Credit. This is £119.14 per week, but their children do qualify for Free School Meals.

## FREE SCHOOL MEALS IF YOU GET UNIVERSAL CREDIT

If you get Universal Credit (UC), your children are entitled to Free School Meals as long as your earnings (and any earnings your partner has) are **under £7,400 per year, after tax and National Insurance**.

If you earned more than this *before* you made your claim for UC but you earn less now, or are out of work, your former earnings don't affect your claim for Free School Meals.

If your earnings vary, you may need to look at several months' income to see if you qualify.

- You will qualify if your earnings are **under £616.67** in the monthly UC assessment period when you make your claim.
- If you earned no more than a total of **£1233.34** in your most recent **two assessment periods**, you qualify.
- If you earned no more than **£1850** in the most recent **three assessment periods**, you qualify.

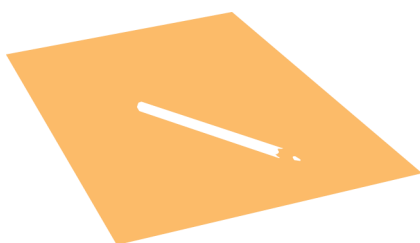


If your family qualified for Free School Meals under pre-2018 rules, which gave them to *everyone* getting UC, even if you did not claim at that time you might still be entitled to them.

Take a look at our **Potteries Gold** information leaflet on Free School Meals to find out more about this.

## HOW TO CLAIM FREE SCHOOL MEALS.

Your Local Council sets out how you claim Free School Meals.



- In **Stoke-on-Trent**, contact your child's school to make a claim.
- In **Newcastle-under-Lyme** and **Biddulph**, you can apply to Staffordshire County Council using an online form at: <https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Education/Educational-awards-benefits/FreeSchoolMeals/Apply-online.aspx> or call **0300 111 8007**



Potteries Gold is a **Citizens Advice Staffordshire North & Stoke-on-Trent** project to help people in Stoke-on-Trent cope with changes to the benefit system

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