



Free school meals

All children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 get a free meal at lunchtime, under the government's Universal Infant Free School Meals scheme. These are provided at all Bury Council maintained schools, academies, free schools, and pupil referral units. **You do not have to apply for these.**

However, if your child is in a Key Stage 1 year group and you get one of the qualifying incomes shown below it will help the school hugely if you make a claim for benefit entitled free school meals, as the school will get extra funding. **This is extremely important as this will help the school give all children in its care a better education.**

From Year 3 onwards, benefit entitled free school meals are only available if you get one of the following:

- Universal Credit - and your earned income is less than £7,400 a year, after tax and not including any benefits
- Income Support
- income-based Job Seekers Allowance
- income-related Employment Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit, providing you are do not get Working Tax Credit, and your annual gross income is less than £16,190
- guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

If you get Working Tax Credits you will not be eligible unless you are receiving the four weeks 'run on' payment after stopping work.

Free school meals are available for pupils at local authority maintained primary and secondary schools, including academies. They are not available for children at private or independent schools.

They are also available for eligible households with:

- children at local authority-maintained nurseries, providing they receive education before and after lunch
- students aged between 16 and 19 who go to Elms Bank Specialist Arts College sixth form
- students who receive Income Support or Income-based Jobseekers Allowance in their own right

If your income changes

If you get free school meals and your income increases above the qualifying limits your children will still get free meals until at least 31 March 2023.

If they are still at school on 31 March 2023, free school meals will continue until the end of year 6 if they are at primary school, or the end of year 11 if they are at secondary school.

This protection only covers children included in the original claim. Any younger siblings who start school after your income exceeds the thresholds will not get free school meals.

Apply for free school meals

Please contact us on **0161 253 5858** between **8.45 and 5.00pm Monday to Friday** or find **Free School Meals on Bury Council's website under Benefits**, then Free School Meals, if you live:

- in Bury Council's area and your child attends a school either in or outside the borough
- in Manchester Council's area and your child attends a school in Bury

You will need yours and your partner's National Insurance numbers or National Asylum Support Service numbers.

When you apply, we will check with the Department for Work and Pensions or HM Revenues and Customs that you are receiving a qualifying income. If they confirm you are eligible, we will let your child's school know. If we cannot confirm your income, we will ask you provide proof of it to us.

There is no need to reclaim free school meals every year. But tell us if:

- you move address
- your child changes school

Children who get paid these benefits directly, instead of through a parent or guardian, can also get free school meals.

Your child may also get free school meals if you get any of these benefits and your child is both:

- younger than the compulsory age for starting school
- in full-time education

If your child is eligible for free school meals, they'll remain eligible until they finish the phase of schooling (primary or secondary) they're in on 31 March 2022.

Allergies and Special Diets

Please ask about our Allergens and Special Diets procedure.

In a nutshell, we will provide a meal for any allergen/special diet that meets the needs of the pupil. The allergen/special diet will need to have been diagnosed by or are supported by documentation from a Doctor, Consultant or Dietician.

A **special diet** refers to any medically prescribed diet e.g. diabetes, PKU, gluten free, egg free, dairy free and a possible combination thereof.

An **allergen** is usually a rapid reaction that causes an inflammatory response which can range from uncomfortable to dangerous. Severe allergic reactions are known as anaphylaxis and can be life threatening.

A **food intolerance** is caused by a difficulty to digest certain substances e.g. lactose, wheat, gluten and yeast, however no allergic reaction takes place.

The procedure for Allergen & Special Diets needs to be followed with form BC 01 being completed by all parties prior to commencement of any food provision.