



July 2024

Dear Families,

Free School Meal Entitlement

We are writing to remind all parents of the application process for Free School Meals, and how it works here at St Thomas More Catholic School. Information provided by Gateshead Council Local Authority suggests that more families may be eligible for Free School Meals but are unaware that they can register for the programme, and are unsure how it works.

If you meet the eligibility criteria shown below, your child / children will be able to receive free school meals. Some people may worry that their child will be singled out for receiving free school meals; however, this is most definitely not the case. As you are aware, we use a cashless payment system in school so children's privacy is guaranteed at all times.

Criteria for eligibility

You or your partner must have a child/children for whom you receive child benefit, who is in full-time education, under 19 years of age, and attending our school or Sixth Form. 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

If this applies to you, please complete the Free School Meals Application Form available from the Local Authority website; www.gateshead.gov.uk

If you satisfy the requirements for your child/children to receive Free School Meals and have submitted a photocopy of the benefit you currently receive with the application to the Local Authority, the school will be informed of this, and free meals will be available immediately. Once the school receives notification that your child is eligible for this, a daily allowance of £2.95 will be automatically added to their school dinner card. Any amount that is spent over the £2.95 daily allowance will need to be topped up by parents/carers.



This £2.95 covers the cost of a hot meal deal; however this allowance can be used for any food which is sold in the dining room. Free water stations are also available in the dining hall for all students to use. Proposed funding changes to schools will also be linked to pupils who are entitled to free school meals. For this reason also, it is in our interest to ensure that all pupils who are entitled to this are supported.

A meal deal is a set price with plenty of options. It includes: a main meal, snack and a drink. Below are some of the items available daily as part of the meal deal.

Mains: Dish of the Day, pasta, jacket potato, a selection of sandwiches and wraps, or a salad.

Snacks: Brownies, flapjack, fruit, jelly, yoghurt, etc

Beverages: Water or fruit juices.

Should you require any additional information please contact Gateshead Local Authority on 0191 433 4848, or at benefitsfm@gateshead.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Tait
Assistant Head Teacher