

## Qualifying Criteria



Any child enrolled at a mainstream school or Pupil Referral Unit can get free school meals as long as their parents or guardians meet the following criteria:

- Income Support
- Job Seekers Allowance (Income based)
- Income related Employment Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit, provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income as assessed by the Inland Revenue that does not exceed £16,190
- Support under part V1 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit during the four week period immediately after your employment finishes or after you start to work less than 16 hours per week.
- A child over the age of 16 in receipt of any of these qualifying benefits in their own right is also eligible to receive free school meals

**\*The Government does not allow us to recognise any other benefit other than those mentioned above.**

**There is no need for families to re-apply annually, children will continue to receive free school meals unless they cease to be entitled, the council will inform the family if this situation should arise.**

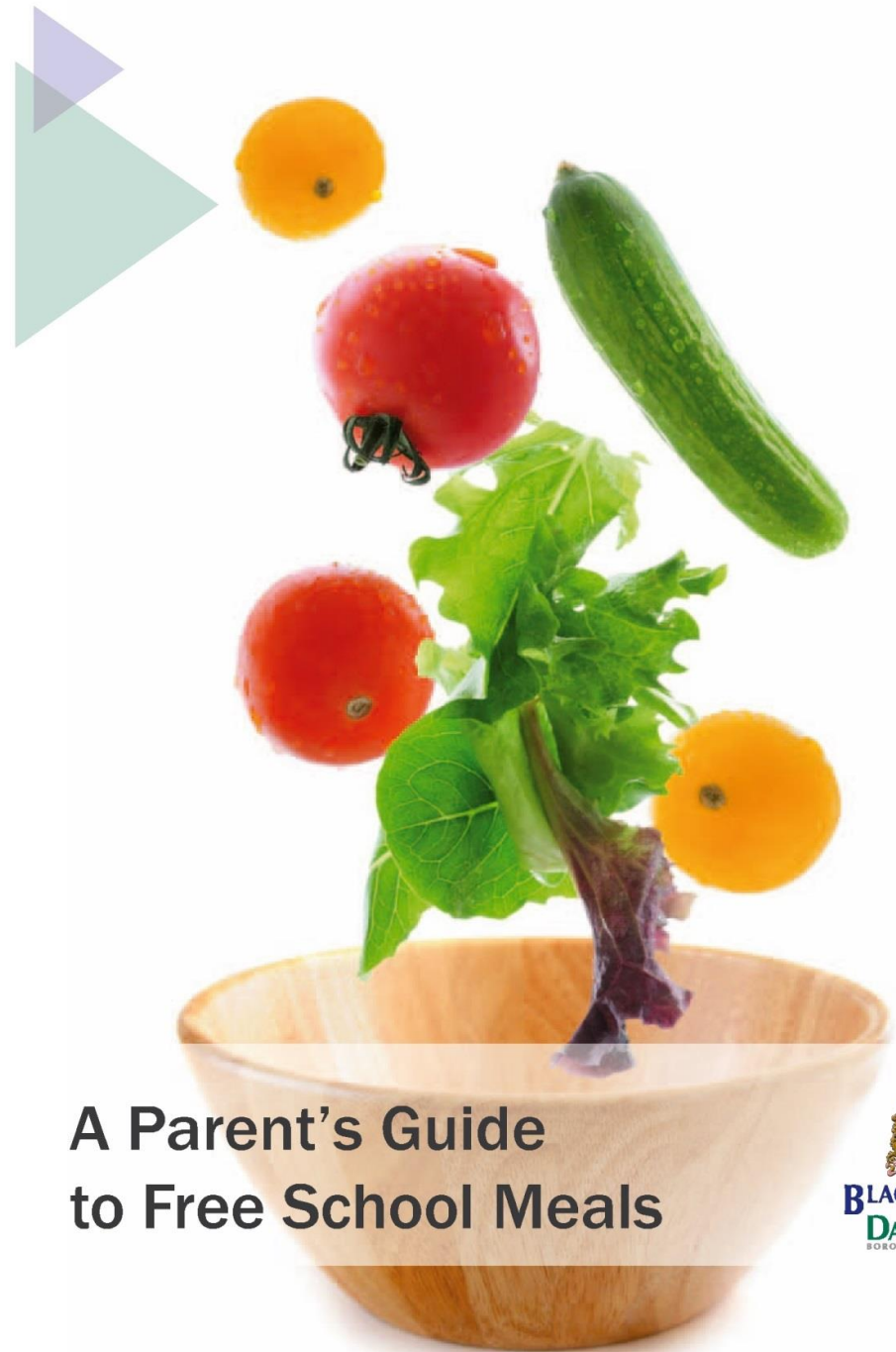
## Claiming Free School Meals

If you are a parent/carer and meet the qualifying criteria you will be entitled to Free School Meals.

For further information on how to register use the link below or contact your child's school

[www.blackburn.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals](http://www.blackburn.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals)

For more information contact your child's school



## A Parent's Guide to Free School Meals



[www.blackburn.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals](http://www.blackburn.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals)

## Introduction

School meals play a key role in the lives of young people's diets and their education. The importance of a well balanced diet should not be underestimated. Research has shown children who eat a healthy balanced diet have longer levels of concentration and are more likely to do well at school.

Our school kitchens prepare nutritious, quality meals using fresh ingredients; a different dish is available every day and includes both a vegetarian and non-vegetarian option.

The benefits of eating a school meal include:

- Helping children to develop positive eating habits
- Improves pupil health, behaviour and motivation
- Removes the hassle and expense of preparing packed lunches
- Children enjoy a well-balanced meal that meets the government nutritional standards
- Children are introduced to new foods and experiences
- Enjoy the social experience of sitting and eating with friends

Free school meals do matter and we believe it is important that all children who are entitled to a free school meal are registered and that all registered children eat their free school meals.

## Universal Infant **Free** School Meals

All children in reception and years 1&2 are now entitled to a free school meal as part of the governments' new initiative Universal Infant Free School Meals. Talk to your child's school for further details on how to take up your entitlement.

[www.blackburn.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals](http://www.blackburn.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals)

## Who can apply for Free School Meals

An application needs to be made and this will usually be by the parent of the child. The definition of parent is not restricted to the natural parents but also includes any person who is the guardian for the child and whom may be in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits. The guardian could be grandparents, brothers or sisters or Family Network Carers and Foster Carers. As long as the individual claiming on behalf of the child can prove he or she has normal parental responsibility the application will be accepted.

## Pupil Premium

The Pupil Premium is additional funding which the government gives to schools to support children in their learning. If you are in receipt of benefits and therefore qualify for free school meals under the qualifying criteria then your child's school can receive additional funding to support and improve your child's education.

It is really important that you register your entitlement so that your child's school can receive the extra school funding which is worth up to **£1300** per pupil and applies equally to those starting in reception or in years 1&2.



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