

**NOTES FOR GUIDANCE TO SCHOOLS ON THE
AUTHORISATION OF FREE SCHOOL LUNCHES**



1. Eligibility from 6 April 2010

Eligibility for free school lunch is limited to families in receipt of the following:

- ❖ Income Support (I/S) *
- ❖ **Income Based** Job Seekers allowance (IBJSA) *
- ❖ An income related employment and support allowance (this was introduced on 27 October 2008)
- ❖ Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- ❖ Child Tax Credit , but not entitled to a Working Tax Credit and have an annual income , as assessed by the Inland Revenue that does not exceed £16,190
- ❖ Guarantee element of State Pension Credit

* Children who receive IS or IBJSA in their own right are also eligible to receive free school lunches.

Confirmation that the family is in receipt of either of these benefits **must** be obtained before entitlement to free school lunch is confirmed. **If you are unable to obtain sight of the benefit book for income support then please ask the parent to complete a copy of the attached form, which the benefits agency must sign and stamp. This must be obtained on an annual basis.**

Copies of evidence must be retained for audit purposes

Documents you can accept to prove receipt of the above benefits are –

Income Support -

- ✓ Form **A124 (A)** – (Full breakdown)
- ✓ Form **A124(B)** – (Less detailed – still accepted)
- ✓ The Benefit book
- ✓ Benefits Agency letter

Job Seekers Allowance -

- ✓ Job Centre/Benefits Agency letter

It is not easy to determine whether JSA is income or contribution based. It is therefore suggested that if difficulty in obtaining proof is experienced you request that section 5 of

the application form is completed, stamped and signed by the relevant Benefits Agency/Job Centre.

Child Tax Credit –

✓ **Form TC602**

This form is the tax credit award notice. The award summary on the front page gives all the details you require and it should be this that you photocopy. Firstly you should determine that it relates to the current year. It will show an award for Child Tax Credit but there should **not** be an award for Working Tax Credit. It will also show the number of children claimed for.

For a claim under any of the above, copies of evidence must be retained for audit purposes.

- ◆ The above documents must be current and display the name of the person that the child normally resides with.
- ◆ The number of the benefit book or identification details of the relevant form or letter and the date should be noted in section 5 of the application form if used.
- ◆ You are responsible for administering applications for free school lunches for all children attending your school regardless of their home address.

Please note the following:

Those families who are in receipt of Working Families Tax Credit are not entitled to free school lunches.

There is no requirement to provide free lunches to a child who is receiving nursery education unless the child is receiving education both before and after the lunch period. This does not apply to those in the nursery awarded free school lunches before 6 April 2003. Their entitlement will be protected.

It should be noted that children who receive “education suitable for children who have not attained compulsory school age” will still need to satisfy the additional requirement of “receiving education both before and after the lunch period”, before being eligible to receive free school meals.

2. Renewals

- ◆ **A student’s entitlement to Free School Lunches must be checked upon initial application and from then on an annual basis every September.**
- ◆ Schools should send out a renewal letter within the first two weeks of term to all those children who currently receive entitlement.

3. Monitoring & Recording

The following procedures must be undertaken

- ◆ Listing entitled children and updating as changes occur
- ◆ Instituting regular reviews
- ◆ Noting details and taking copies of relevant documents
- ◆ Providing of reports as required for audit purposes
- ◆ Making records available for audit inspection
- ◆ Keeping records for a minimum of 5 financial years plus the current financial year.

4. Refunds

- ◆ A refund of monies paid by those entitled to free school lunches **cannot** be backdated except in cases where schools have been notified of the entitlement but the claimant is not able to provide immediate proof of entitlement.
- ◆ Refunds will be allowed only once entitlement has been clearly established and may only be backdated to the time when the school was advised of the entitlement and this is supported by documentary evidence.
- ◆ *The onus for providing proof is on the claimant.*

All requests for refunds should be made in writing to your catering service and must be accompanied by documentary evidence i.e. signature of Headteacher confirming the date the school was notified of entitlement.