

22 March 2018

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Universal Credit and Free School Meals

As you may be aware the government has recently announced that from 01 April they are revising the eligibility for children from low income households to receive free school meals as part of the Universal Credit (UC) scheme.

- Currently and until 31 March the children of all UC claimants are eligible to receive a free school meal.
- After 01 April, for UC claimants, only those parent/carers with a household income of less than £7,400 will be eligible.

It is therefore important that, if you receive UC and are not currently eligible to receive free school meals for your children on the basis of being on a low income (that is not including those who automatically receive a free school meal in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2), that you apply now.

You can apply either:

- by completing the attached form that should be dated and sent to the council by email to education@york.gov.uk or by post to the address on the top of this letter by no later than 31 March.
- by completing the online form on the Parent Portal at any time up until 23:59 31 March at www.york.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals and forward a screenshot by email to education@york.gov.uk or UC confirmation letter in your own name showing they receive UC.

In both circumstances you will also need to send proof of your UC status either by attaching a screenshot, email, or UC confirmation letter in your own name showing that you currently receive UC. You can do this either in an email or by post. Please include your full name and the name of your child(ren) in the email or covering letter.

All those applications and proofs received before 01 April will be accepted. Please note that we will not be able to process those sent/received after 31 March without referring to the new £7,400 household earnings threshold, for which we may require further proof.

The government has stated that any child that receives a free school meal on or before 31 March 2018 on the basis of being on a low income (that is not including those who automatically receive a free school meal in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2) will be 'protected' by these changes for a number of years to come – until after the end of the UC 'rollout' plus until the end of a child's time at their current phase of school – for example for a primary aged pupil until the end of their time at primary school.

For each child of an eligible parent that attends school full time and is of school age;

- your child is entitled to take up a free school meal, and
- your child's school will receive additional funding for up to the next 6 years by claiming the Pupil Premium – in 2017/18 this is worth £1320 per pupil to a primary school and £935 per pupil to a secondary school.

This additional funding helps schools greatly, and so if you think you may be eligible as you are now in receipt of UC, we ask that you apply now, and ensure we receive your application before 01 April. Thank you in advance for applying.

If you require any further information, please contact us on 01904 551554 or email education@york.gov.uk.

Yours faithfully,

School Services