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Free School Meals wage threshold eligibility criteria will be introduced from 1 April 2018 for new claims from working parents who also claim Universal Credit (protection is applied to existing claims made up to 31 March 2018)

We are making parents and carers aware, if they are receiving Universal Credit, that they will presently qualify for Free School Meals for all of their school aged children (provided a claim for this is made).

You will qualify, even if you are working and receive Universal Credit (in addition to wages at any level).

However, a wage threshold is to be introduced from 1 April 2018. Anyone who works and successfully applies before 31 March 2018, will get transitional protection so their child(ren). You will therefore continue to receive Free School Meals either until 2022 or until their child(ren) finishes their current phase of education, regardless of any increase in their earnings level.

Wage thresholds for working parents who also get Universal Credit will mean some parents will not qualify if they make a new Free School Meals application after 1 April 2018.

So the big message is **APPLY IMMEDIATELY FOR FREE SCHOOL MEALS AND CERTAINLY BEFORE 31 MARCH 2018.**

Applications can be made in the usual ways

1. Via the Wirral Council website www.wirral.gov.uk/free-school-meals (parents should ignore any negative messages they receive from the eligibility auto checker)
2. Via a paper form submitted at a One Stop Shop or posted to Benefits Service PO Box 290 Wallasey CH27 9FQ
3. Via e-mail to reeschoolmeals@wirral.gov.uk advising full name, address, date of birth, National Insurance number, names of children and schools attended

Proof of Universal Credit will be required, and the wage threshold figure is calculated using information from up to three Universal Credit past monthly assessment periods. This is to take into account that many parents earn fluctuating amounts each month due to zero hours contracts etc. The regulations pertaining to the administration of the scheme have been altered to implement a net earnings threshold of £7,400 pa from 1 April 2018.

PJMalcolm
Head Teacher

“Enjoy! Achieve! Aspire! Now and in the future.....!”