



St Mary's Catholic First School
Lucetta Lane, Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 2DD.
Tel: 01305 262258
Fax: 01305 257101



E-mail: office@stmarysdorchester.dorset.sch.uk
Website: www.stmarysdorchester.dorset.sch.uk

Head Teacher: Mrs Paula Fearn



7th March 2017

Dear Parents

Free School Meals



As you will know, all children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 receive free school meals.

Although they receive free school meals automatically, if you qualify under any of the following criteria, you can apply for free school meals and this generates income for the school to provide additional support and financial help for these pupils.



You could meet the criteria if you get any of the following:

- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- income support
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit. This is as long as you are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and your annual gross income isn't more than £16,190
- Working Tax Credit 'run-on' payment (paid for four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
- Universal Credit



Children who get paid these benefits themselves, instead of through a parent or guardian, can also get free school meals.

Your child might also get free school meals if you get any of these benefits and your child is both:

- younger than the compulsory age for starting school
- in full-time education

Extra funding for St Mary's

If you fit the eligibility criteria for free schools meals and your child is in either Reception class, Year 1 or Year 2, your child's school may be eligible for pupil premium.

Pupil Premium is extra funding given to the school to:

- support more disadvantaged pupils, of all abilities
- to close the gaps between them and their peers

Parents may also be eligible for financial support to help with the cost of uniform or school trips.

Applying for pupil premium

You can submit a free school meals application to apply for pupil premium for your school. Submitting an application will have no effect on your child's free school meal.

Your child will receive a free school as long as:

- your child continues to attend a Dorset school
- you continue to receive one of the qualifying benefits

If you wish to apply, please visit <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/free-school-meals>

Please see below an FAQ from the Dorset for you website which explains the purpose of applying:

My child will get a free school meal because they are in infant classes, why do I still need to apply?

Although all children in infant classes (reception, year 1 or year 2) will receive a free lunch meal, it is still important that you apply if you might be eligible. This is because, if your child is eligible, the school will receive additional funding called Pupil Premium. The school will receive £1,300 (2014-15) per pupil which is used to support the education of all pupils from low-income families as needed, to ensure that they get the same chances as other children.

It is up to the school how this money is spent, but Ofsted check with them that they have used it to help raise attainment of pupils from low-income families where performance tables show that their attainment tend not to be as good as their more affluent peers. This can add up a lot of additional funding to a school and can be used to really help children to achieve well as they grow older. Additionally, some schools use this to help with uniform costs or the cost of trips or other educational activities instead of asking for contributions from parents where they know it can be hard to find additional money. But that is up to each individual school to decide and you will need to talk to your school to find out what their policies are for helping out.

If you have any queries concerning this, please pop into the school office.

Yours Sincerely



Mrs Paula Fearn
Head Teacher