



Free school meals for families with 'no recourse to public funds.'

On 6th April 2020 eligibility for free school meals support was extended to some families with 'no recourse to public funds' (NRPF) for a temporary period as a result of the Covid-19 crisis. In April 2022 the Government decided to permanently expand this to all families with No Recourse to Public Funds regardless of their immigration status as long as they can show that their income is below the threshold.

Who is eligible?

Children will now be able to access free school meals support if their families have no recourse to public funds **and** their families earn less than £31,500p/a for families living within London, and £28,200 for those outside of London. In practice, the income threshold of £31,500 or £28,200 a year will only affect your family if you and/or your partner are working.

Families who are now eligible for free school meals includes, **but is not limited to**;

- Families with an outstanding immigration application
- Children whose families have no immigration status
- Children from families who have been granted leave to remain with NRPF on the basis of family or private life grounds.
- Children whose families have NRPF and receive support from a local authority under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 (for example, from social services or the NRPF team).
- Children whose families are in receipt of Section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. This group in particular will automatically qualify and will not need to have their income assessed.

How do you apply for free school meals if you are now eligible?

If you have no recourse to public funds and children in school you should contact your child's school or local authority to apply. You will need to provide evidence to prove that you are eligible and you may be asked to sign a form to confirm your circumstances. We have suggested below what evidence you may need to provide. If for any reason it will be difficult for you to provide evidence of your situation, explain this to your child's school. They should be flexible about what evidence you can provide.

What evidence should I provide?

- If you have immigration status with a no recourse to public funds condition attached to it you can show the school/local authority your Home Office documentation or Biometric Residence Permit.
- If you are receiving support from a local authority under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 you can provide a document from the local authority confirming this. This could either be a copy of the assessment that the local authority has carried out or a letter from the local authority that confirms you are receiving support.
- If you receive Section 4 support, you can show a letter from the Home Office or local authority confirming that you are receiving Section 4 support and/or an ASPEN card. (Your family will automatically qualify so you do not need to have your income assessed.)
- If you have an outstanding immigration application or appeal you can show proof of this.

Unless you are receiving asylum support under Section 4 you will also need to confirm that your family does not earn more than £31,500p/a for families living within London, and £28,200 for those outside of London per year after tax.

To show this, you could provide a:

- payslip
- P60
- bank statement
- letter from your bank
- letter from your employer

Where can I direct schools for more information?

The government's guidance on the permanent extension of free school meals can be accessed [here](#).

Is my child now also eligible for Pupil Premium?

The pupil premium is a sum of money given to a school by the Government which they can use in a number of ways to improve the educational attainment of pupils who are disadvantaged. Primary schools receive £1,345 a year for each eligible pupil and secondary schools receive £955 a year. Schools can claim pupil premium for all children who are in receipt of Free School Meals.

As children in families with NRPF are now eligible for Free School Meals, the school will also be able to apply for Pupil Premium for these children.

More information on Pupil Premium can be found [here](#).