



15 July, 2025

Free School Meals – 2025/26

Dear Families

As we approach the end of the school year, we wanted to remind families about the application process for Free School Meals and to encourage those who may be eligible to apply. Gateshead Council has advised that many families may qualify but are unaware of the process or their entitlement.

If your child is eligible, they will receive a daily allowance of £2.95 for school meals, which can be used for a hot meal deal or any food sold in the dining room. The allowance is added automatically to your child's dinner card, and any amount spent over this will need to be topped up by parents/carers.

Eligibility Criteria (2025/26):

You or your partner:

- Receive Child Benefit for the child.
- Have a child in full-time education, under 19, attending our school or Sixth Form.
- You must also receive one of the following:
 - Income Support
 - Income-Based Job Seekers Allowance (JSA – IB)
 - Guarantee Pension Credit
 - Income-Related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA – IR)
 - Child Tax Credit (but not Working Tax Credit) with an annual income below £16,190
 - Working Tax Credit Run-on
 - Universal Credit with a net earned income below £7,400
 - Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

You can apply online at: <https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/7433/Free-school-meals>

If you need help, contact Gateshead Council at benefitsfm@gateshead.gov.uk or call 0191 433 4848.

By applying for Free School Meals, your child will not only enjoy a healthy, nutritious meal every day, but our school will also receive additional funding through the Pupil Premium. This funding, available for up to six years for every eligible child, helps us enhance the learning environment for all students. It boosts our school budget, allowing us to invest in valuable resources, enriching experiences, and wider opportunities that support both academic achievement and personal growth. We are happy to discuss how this funding is used and you can also view our Pupil Premium Strategy Statement here:

<https://www.stthomasmore.org.uk/our-school/key-information/pupil-recovery-premium>

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Even if your child prefers packed lunches, a successful application still benefits the whole school community.

Pupil Premium Plus

If your child was previously looked after by a Local Authority and is now adopted, subject to a Special Guardianship Order, or a Child Arrangement Order, the school may be eligible to receive £2,570 per year to support their needs.

To enable us to claim this funding, please notify us before January and provide a copy of the relevant legal order before the end of the autumn term. We will accept this information in the way that feels most comfortable for you—by phone, email, in writing, or in person.

Working in Partnership

We understand that every child is unique and that early experiences can have a lasting impact. We are committed to working closely with families to ensure that every child’s educational journey is positive and successful.

If you have any questions, please contact us via the usual House email addresses.

St Bernadette	St Catherine Laboure	St John Fisher	St Therese
STM-StBQueries@stm.bwcet.com	STM-StCLQueries@stm.bwcet.com	STM-stjfqueries@stm.bwcet.com	STM-sttqueries@stm.bwcet.com

We hope you have a lovely and restful summer break.

Yours sincerely,

Mr S Tait
 Assistant Head Teacher

