



# St. Jérôme Church of England Bilingual Primary School

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September 2018

Dear Parents/Carers,

## **Important information regarding Free School Meals – Please read in full**

The Government provides additional funding to schools to support children whose families are in receipt of UK Benefits. Apart from providing Free School Meals throughout a child's time at primary school, our school is able to support the child and their family in a number of different ways including uniform subsidy, help with paying for trips and other activities.

It should be noted that whilst the eligibility refers to 'Free School Meals' (FSM) **this is entirely separate** from the Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) which entitles EVERY child from Reception to Year 2 to a free hot meal every day at school.

There have recently been changes to Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility under Universal Credit. The following explains the changes and how they might affect you.

### **What are the new eligibility criteria?**

Children are entitled to receive Free School Meals (FSM) if they or their parents or guardians receive any of the benefits below:

- Universal Credit, provided they have an annual net earned income not exceeding £7,400 (£616.67 per month) (Your net income is your household income after taxes and deductions. It does not include income through Universal Credit and other benefits you may receive.)
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guarantee element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit, provided they are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190, as assessed by HMRC
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit

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Registration number: 09010445 (England & Wales)

Registered office: London Diocesan Board for Schools, 36 Causton Street, London SW1P 4AU

### **I am not currently claiming free school meals – what does this mean for me?**

If you think you might be eligible for Free School Meals, please inform the school as soon as possible. The information you provide will be used to check if you are in receipt of a Qualifying benefit and, if you are on Universal Credit, that your earnings do not exceed the threshold. If you claim Universal Credit, your earnings will be assessed from up to three of your last Universal Credit assessment periods.

### **I am currently claiming free school meals – what does this mean for me?**

Most people won't be affected by the new criteria. If you're currently claiming free school meals, but don't meet the new criteria, your child will continue to receive free school meals until the end of the Universal Credit rollout period. This will apply even if your earnings rise above the new threshold or if you stop being entitled to Universal Credit. The rollout period is currently scheduled to end in March 2022.

Once Universal Credit is fully rolled out, your child will keep their free school meal until the end of their current phase of education, i.e. primary or secondary.

### **Where can I get more information?**

If you need any further information or think you may be eligible to claim FSM, please speak to a member of school staff in confidence. You can also visit the FAQ on the Free School Meals Eligibility Checker website: <https://pps.lgfl.org.uk> or visit the free school meal website: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-freeschool-meals>

At St Jérôme we are committed to providing the best support possible for our families and this funding is an essential element. It is particularly vital that if your child is enrolled in Reception, Year One or Year Two, which means s/he is entitled to receive Universal Infant Free School Meals, (UIFSM) that you still make an applications for Free school Meals (FSM) as this will ensure your child is fully supported throughout their primary education and beyond if you continue to receive Universal Credit in the future. Any funding received will be utilised at the school's discretion in the best interest of your child(ren).

Please be assured that all communication regarding this matter will be treated in complete confidence and with the utmost discretion and sensitivity.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs K C Smith  
School Business Manager

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