

# Free school meals How to apply online

Using the Family Portal to make an application

To start your online application, visit our website:

[https://emsonline.sunderland.gov.uk/CitizenPortal\\_LIVE/](https://emsonline.sunderland.gov.uk/CitizenPortal_LIVE/)

This document has been created to help guide you through completing an online application for Free School Meals via the Family Portal.

Through the portal you can also make applications for Early education places for two-year old and School places.

To make an online application you will need a valid email address to complete the registration process and to receive confirmation of your application.

If you have any difficulties making an application, please contact us by telephone: (0191) 561 1417 or email: [freeschoolmeals@togetherforchildren.org.uk](mailto:freeschoolmeals@togetherforchildren.org.uk) or use the contact us link on the Family Portal.

## How to qualify for free school meals

To be eligible you must be in receipt of one of the benefits listed below:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit, provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income, as assessed by the Inland Revenue that does not exceed £16,190 or
- Guarantee element of Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit run-on paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit - if you apply after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

Children who receive Income Support or Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance in their own right are also entitled to claim free school meals.

Every child in reception, year 1 and year 2 receive a free school lunch. However, if you receive one of the benefits listed you should still make an application for free school meals as this will ensure that your child school receives additional funding to support their education.

## How do I apply for free school meals?

You can apply online via the Families Portal using the following link:

[https://emsonline.sunderland.gov.uk/CitizenPortal\\_LIVE/](https://emsonline.sunderland.gov.uk/CitizenPortal_LIVE/)

Sunderland City Council

Family Portal

Home Login Register English/Cymraeg

Don't have an account? Please [register](#)

Email Address

Password

Login

[Forgotten your password?](#)

Welcome to the Family Portal

Please enter the email address you used when registering

If you are new to the portal please use the **Register** option.

In order to use the Family Portal please ensure that your computer/device is running one of the below browsers

- Internet Explorer 10
- Internet Explorer 11
- Mozilla Firefox (latest version)
- Google Chrome (latest version)

We will check your eligibility and let you know whether you qualify for Free School Meals.

## Setting up your account on the Family Portal

You will need to register with a valid email address to use the Family Portal. You need only do this once, as when you have set-up your account you will be able to use your email address and password to log-in to the account again.

## Logging-in with a Family Portal account

If you have previously registered with our Family Portal enter the email address you used to register and your password and click **Login**.

Home

Don't have an account? Please [register](#)

Email Address

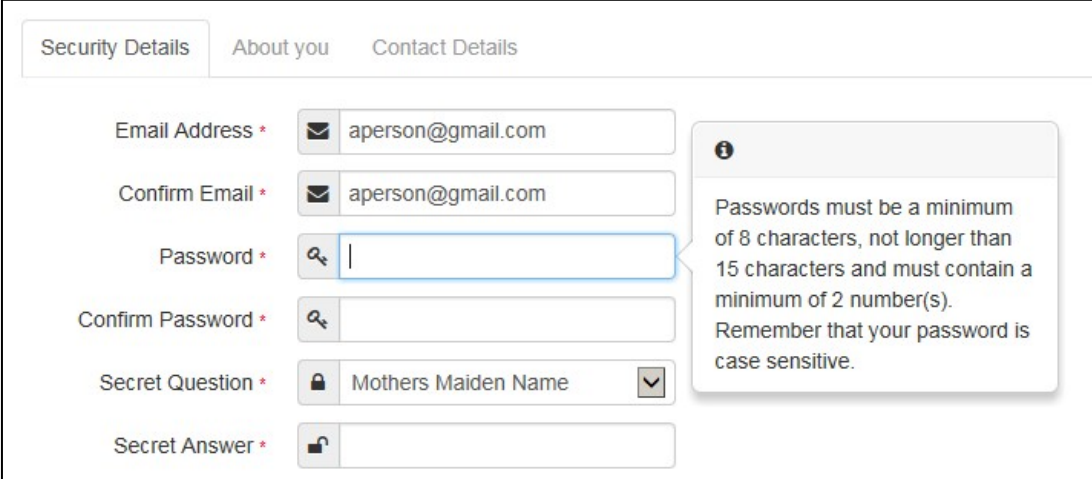
Password

Login

[Forgotten your password?](#)

## New user of the Families Portal

If you are new to the Family Portal website and creating an account for the first time or need to re-register with a new email address, please click **Register** where it says **Don't have an account? Please Register**. This will open the **Registration** screen. You will need to complete your details for all boxes marked with an \*



The screenshot shows a registration form with the following fields and a tooltip:

- Security Details** (selected tab), **About you**, **Contact Details**
- Email Address \***: Input field containing "aperson@gmail.com"
- Confirm Email \***: Input field containing "aperson@gmail.com"
- Password \***: Input field with a cursor, highlighted by a tooltip
- Confirm Password \***: Input field with a cursor
- Secret Question \***: Dropdown menu with "Mothers Maiden Name" selected
- Secret Answer \***: Input field

**Tooltip:** Passwords must be a minimum of 8 characters, not longer than 15 characters and must contain a minimum of 2 number(s). Remember that your password is case sensitive.

## Setting up your account

Enter your Email Address and input the same address into the **Confirm Email** box.

Enter your chosen Password and enter the same password into the **Confirm Password** box.

Your password will need:

To be at least 10 characters long and up to a maximum of 128

Must contain at least one of each of the following:

- UPPER CASE CHARACTER
- lower case character
- number
- special character these include ! " £ \$ % ^ ( ) \_ - + . ? @ Space

Select your Secret question from the drop-down menu

Type in the answer to your **Secret Question** into the **Secret Answer** box then click **Next**

## Providing information about you and your family

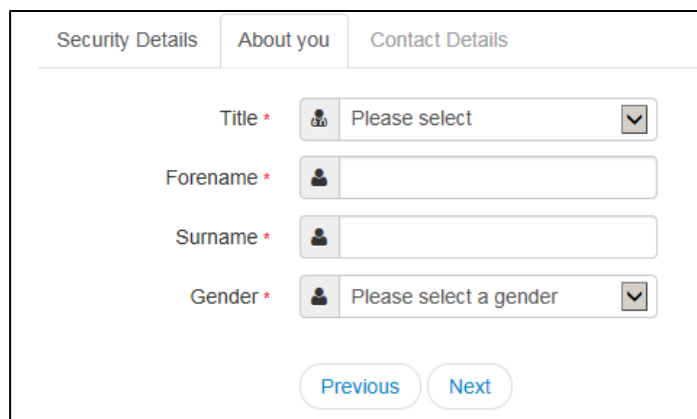
This will open the **About You** tab, Fields marked with an \* must be completed

Select your **Title** from the drop-down menu

Enter your **Forename** and **Surname**

Select your **Gender**

Click on **Next** or you can click **Previous** to return to the previous screen



Security Details | **About you** | Contact Details

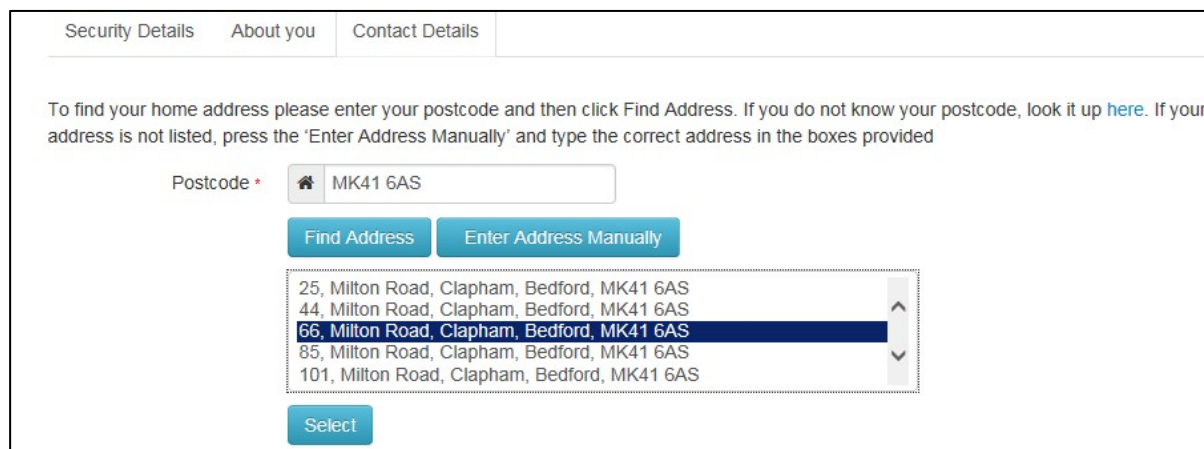
Title \*

Forename \*

Surname \*

Gender \*

## Providing information about where you live and how to contact you



Security Details | About you | **Contact Details**

To find your home address please enter your postcode and then click Find Address. If you do not know your postcode, look it up [here](#). If your address is not listed, press the 'Enter Address Manually' and type the correct address in the boxes provided

Postcode \*

Enter your **Postcode** and then click  to search for your house from the postcode that you have provided.

If your address does not appear after entering the **Postcode** and clicking  then click  and enter your address details.

If you do not know your postcode then click **I don't have a Postcode** and you will be able to type in your address details.

Please provide us with a phone number either: **Home Phone, Mobile Number or Work Phone.**

When you have entered all your contact details please click

[Submit Registration](#)

An email will now be sent to the email address that you have used to register. Please check you inbox (including any Spam or Junk folders) for an email from **No Reply**. You will need to click the link in the email to complete the registration process. If you are unable to click on the link you can also copy and paste it in to the internet browsers address bar.

After clicking the registration link, you will be asked to log in. Enter the **Email Address** and **Password** that you used to register.



The image shows a login form with two input fields. The first field is labeled 'Email Address' and has an envelope icon to its left. The second field is labeled 'Password' and has a key icon to its left. Both fields are empty.

Your registration is now complete.

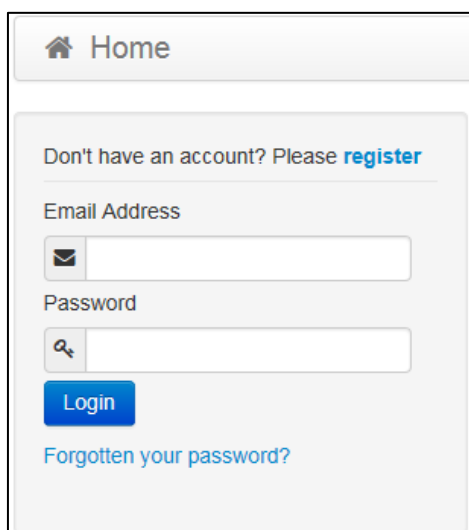
## Logging into the Family Portal to make an application

Once you have completed your registration with the Family Portal you will be able to make an application.

This guidance will tell you how to make an application reset your password or change your email address.


Open the Family Portal [https://emsonline.sunderland.gov.uk/CitizenPortal\\_LIVE/](https://emsonline.sunderland.gov.uk/CitizenPortal_LIVE/)

Enter your **Email Address** and **Password** and click **Login**



If you have forgotten your password, then click on the [Forgotten your password?](#) Enter your email address to be sent a link regarding changing your password. You can also change your password when you are logged in to the Family Portal by clicking **My Account** and selecting the **Change** Password option.



Click on  this shows your own details with any of your children's details that you have provided. If you have already provided a child's details, you do not need to provide them again. However, you can add additional children at any time. You may wish to provide details of all your children even if you do not wish to make an application for them at this time.

To add a child click **Add Child** and fill out the child's details and address. Click **Add Child** to save the child's details and you will see them added to the **My Family** section.

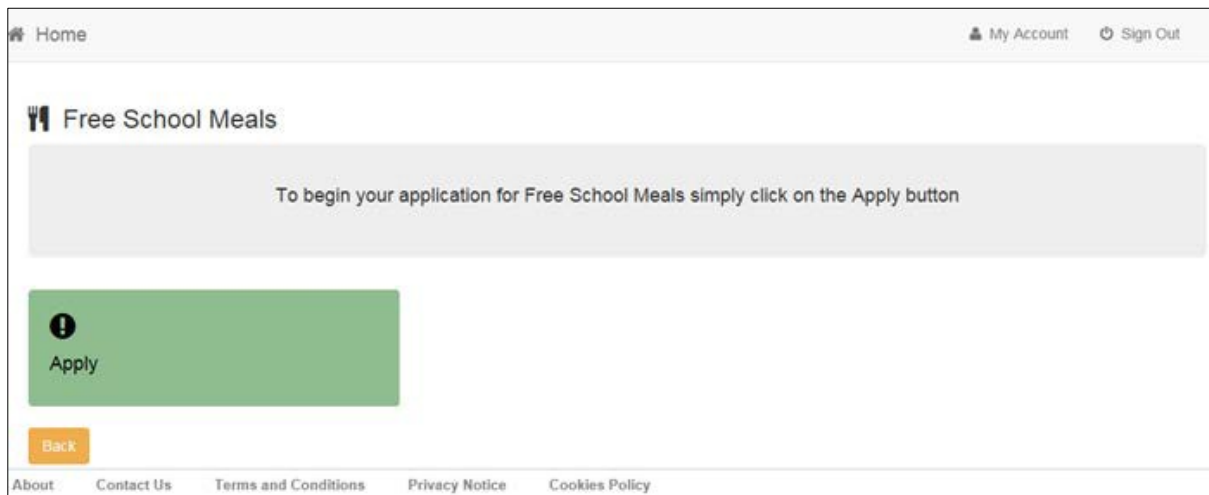




Click the Home button to return to the main screen and click on

If you have previously made other Free School Meals claims they will be shown.

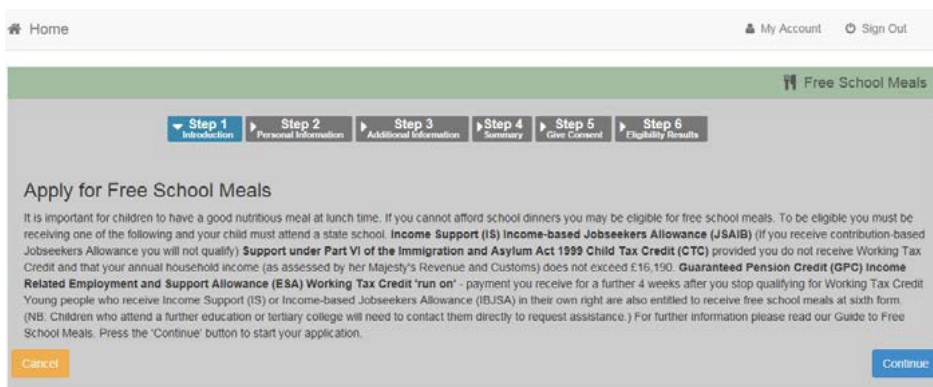
Click **Apply** to start a new Free School Meals claim.



There are 6 steps to making the application.

### Step 1 – Introduction

Please read through the Apply for Free School Meals introduction



Click  to proceed

### Step 2 – Personal Information

To check if you are eligible for Free School Meals with information held by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) we require your Date of Birth, National Insurance Number or National Asylum Support Service Number along with your details.

The screenshot shows a web form titled 'Free School Meals' with a progress bar at the top indicating six steps. Step 2, 'Personal Information', is the current step. The form is divided into two main sections. The left section, titled 'Personal Details', contains a 'Date of Birth' field, a 'Please enter either:' instruction, a 'National Insurance No.' field (with example AB123456C), an 'OR:' instruction, and a 'National Asylum Support Service No.' field (with example 12/03/65784). Below these is an 'Add Child' button. The right section, titled 'Additional Information', contains an 'Address' field (with example 34, Church Walk, Marston Moretaine, BEDFORD, Simshire, MK43 0J), a 'Home Phone' field, a 'Mobile Number' field (with example 565656567), and a 'Gender' dropdown menu (with 'Male' selected). A blue message box at the top of the right section states: 'If your details are not correct, please navigate to the Contact Details section using the My Account link in the navigation bar'. At the bottom of the form are 'Back' and 'Continue' buttons.

Enter your **Date of Birth**

Enter your **National Insurance Number** following the correct format e.g. AB123456C

Or

Enter your **National Asylum Support Service** number e.g. 12/03/65784

Your **Address, Home Phone, Mobile Number, and Gender** will appear on the right hand side. If these are not correct, click **My Account** in the top right-hand corner of the Family Portal screen and amend the required details.

You can now either select an existing child to add to your Free School Meals claim or you can click **Add Child** to add in details about the child or children you wish to include in the Free School Meals application.

To include an existing child in the application

Click the **Include in Application** slider bar against each child you want to include so that **Yes** appears.

Click **Continue**

To add a child to this application

Click **Add Child**

Enter the child details. Fields marked with an \* must be completed.

Once you have entered the child's details click **Add Child and Continue**

### Step 3 – Additional Information

Step 3 will ask you a question relation to your Free School Meals claim.

Enter a date into the both “When would you like your Free School Meal Claim to start from?” Please note This is not a guarantee but will assist us with your application. Also note that Free School Meals **cannot be back dated**.

Once you have entered the date, click **Continue**

### Step 4 – Summary

The Summary screen will give a summary of your Free School Meals claim, which will detail the **Claimant Details** and the **Children** who you have included in the claim, along with the **Additional Information**.

Click **Continue** to proceed. If you do need to make any changes to the any details click **Back**.

### Step 5 – Give Consent

You must read the **Declaration** statement. This is to ensure that you understand that we will use the information that you have provided to check if you are eligible to Free School Meals, but also that you provide permission for your details to be stored in a database so that Free School Meals can be provided, should you be eligible.

Free School Meals

Step 1 Introduction   Step 2 Personal Information   Step 3 Additional Information   Step 4 Summary   Step 5 Give Consent   Step 6 Eligibility Results

### Declaration by Parent/Carer

I agree to notify the County Council - Education Transport and Awards immediately if my child should fail to attend the school for any reason, for any part of the term covered by the award, or if my benefit ceases. I confirm that I am responsible for the child(ren) named on this form and that he/she lives/they live with me. I agree that you can use the information I have provided to process my claim for free school lunches and will contact other sources as allowed by law to verify my initial, and on-going entitlement. I understand that the results of any free school lunch eligibility check may also be used to assess my entitlement to school transport (if applicable). I understand that my application will need to be renewed at the end of the academic year and I agree to provide new evidence of benefit entitlement if I am requested to do so. I will inform you if I change my address.

I confirm that I have read and agree to the declaration.

[Back](#) [Accept](#)

Once you have read the statement, click the square box to place a tick in it.

Click **Accept**

### Step 6 – Eligibility Results

Using the information that you have provided we will check if you are eligible using the DfE's Eligibility Checking Service.

You will receive an Application Reference number that you can store and use if you need to contact us about your application.

Click **Finish**

If you have any further enquiries about your application, please contact us on:  
(0191) 561 1417 and provide your Application Reference number.

## Changing your details

You can change your personal details by logging into the Family Portal and selecting **My Account** in the top right-hand corner.

### Personal details

After logging in to the Family Portal, within **My Account - Personal Details** you can view or amend your Title, Forename, Surname and Gender here. Click **Save** when you have made any changes.

### Contact details

After logging into the Family Portal, within **My Account – Contact Details** you can view or amend your Address Details and Telephone Numbers. Click **Save** when you have made any changes.

### Change Email Address

After logging into the Family Portal, within **My Account – Change Email Address** you can view or amend your Email Address and Password here. Click **Submit** when you have made any changes.

### Change Password

After logging into the Family Portal, within **My Account – Change Password** you can view or amend your Family Portal Password. Click **Submit** when you have made any changes.

Your password will need to be:

At least 10 characters long and up to a maximum of 128

Must contain at least one of each of the following:

- UPPER CASE CHARACTER
- lower case character
- number
- special character these include ! " £ \$ % ^ ( ) \_ - + . ? @ Space

### Change Secret Question

After logging into the Family Portal, within **My Account – Change Secret Question** you can view or amend your Family Portal Secret Question. Click **Submit** when you have made any changes.

### Change of Circumstances

See the details on the Family Portal screen regarding a change or circumstance.

## Help – Frequently asked questions

### **What happens after I have made my application?**

We will check to see if you are eligible for Free School Meals

If we can confirm that you're eligible you will receive an email requesting that you log in to the Family Portal where a message in the Messages section will confirm that your children are eligible.

We will inform your child or children's school so that Free School Meals can start from the Monday of the next week.

If we are not able to confirm that you are eligible you will also receive an email requesting that you log in to the Family Portal where a message in the Messages section will inform you about the next steps you will need to take.

We must receive a completed application along with any required evidence of benefit entitlement before Free School Meals can be granted.

Entitlement to Free School Meals cannot be backdated.

### **Lost of Forgotten Password**

If you need to retrieve your password, click on the Forgotten your password link on the Family Portal log in screen. You will be asked to enter the email address and the answer to your **Secret Question** entered during your registration. Your password will be emailed to this email address.

You can also change your password after logging in within the My Account – Change Password menu.

### **I need some help with my application**

If you have any questions, please contact the Free School Meals Team – (0191) 561 1417 or email: [Freeschoolmeals@togetherforchildren.org.uk](mailto:Freeschoolmeals@togetherforchildren.org.uk)

### **What happens if my circumstances change?**

If you are claiming free school meals due to receiving a benefit, Tax or Universal credit then you must inform us immediately if your circumstances change. If you stop receiving one of the benefits, Tax or Universal credit then you should contact us and you will no longer be entitled to Free School Meals.

### **What do I need to do to make sure that my claim for Free School Meals continues?**

We review your free school meals claim regularly using the DfE Eligibility Checking service. This service only confirms whether you are or aren't entitled to Free School Meals. It does not provide any other information. If we cannot confirm that you are entitled through doing this check, we will contact you for up to date evidence of the benefits, Tax or universal Credits that you receive.

**Will I need to re-apply if my child changes school?**

You child remains entitled to free school meals as long as you are eligible. Free school meal entitlement follows you child and any new school will be informed of their entitlement.

**My child is in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2 – why am I being asked to complete a Free School Meal application?**

All children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 receive a free school lunch funded by the Government. However, if parents of children in those year groups receive the benefits, Tax or Universal credits that would mean that they are eligible for Free School Meals, the school will receive Pupil Premium if the parent makes an application for Free School Meals. Pupil Premium is additional funding paid to the school to purchase extra teaching support or resources to enhance children's education.