

## **Key messages for parents:**

Applying for Free Schools Meals

### **Why apply when children in primary schools already receive a free hot lunch in school?**

Although all children in reception, year 1 and 2 receive a free lunch at school under the Government's Universal infant free school meals (UIFSM) scheme and those in years 3 to 6 receive a meal under the Eat for Free programme we want to encourage all families to apply for free school meals to determine their eligibility for additional benefits.

### **The benefits**

Children from families who are in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits are currently entitled to much more than a free lunch at school:

- **Food vouchers or parcels during the school holidays**
- **Free places at council school holiday activities**
- **Additional support at school to raise their attainment**

In addition, for every child whose family applies and qualifies for FSM their primary school will receive £1,345 in the budget and secondary schools receive £955.

### **How do I apply?**

Applying is easy, simply visit Newham website and complete a simple online form. All you need to apply is your name, national insurance number or ARC number and the names of your children.

<https://www.newham.gov.uk/schools-education/free-school-meals/2?documentId=502&categoryId=20004>

### **I am working, why should I apply?**

We encourage everyone to apply irrespective of their home or immigration status as we hold you details on file and check them every week to see if your entitlement may change. This ensures no child misses out on any of they may be entitled to.

### **I don't want the Council or my school knowing about my finances.**

Eligibility is determined by the Department for Education's Eligibility Checking Services (ECS). This only informs council officers and schools if a child is or is not entitled to free school meals based on the information the applicant provided – they don't get told the reason why or anything about your financial position.