

Hardship Payment for Low Income Families & Christmas Free School Lunch Payments

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q Do I have to apply for the Hardship payment for low income families?

No application for the £100 Hardship Grant or the Free School Lunch payment will be required if you are already in receipt of Free School Meals/School Clothing Grant on the basis of low income eligibility.

Q When will I receive the Hardship payment for low income families?

Payment will be made by no later than the 21st December 2020, this will be one payment for both the Hardship payment and free school meals, paid for those children that qualify.

Q When will I receive the Free School Lunch Payment for the Christmas holiday period?

Payment will be made by no later than the 21st December 2020, this will be one payment for both the Hardship payment and free school meals, paid for those children that qualify and have been confirmed as eligible by the 30th November 2020. Those who apply and are confirmed as eligible after the 30th November will receive payment by the second week in January. This is in accordance with published guidance.

Q How will this payment be made?

The funds due for the Hardship payment and free school meals, for the period of closure, will be paid by bank transfer to the Bank Account information provided at your time of application.

Q How much will I receive?

The Hardship payment of £100 is per child and not per household, payment of £20 per week per child will be paid in support of provision of Free School Meals. The total payment per qualifying child for the Christmas period will be £140. Families with more than one child will receive one payment for all children, eg 2 children payment of £280, 3 children payment of £420, etc

Q What if my bank account information has changed?

If your Bank Account information has changed since your online application for Free School meals, please contact the Customer Service Team as soon as possible who will be able to advise. The Customer Services Team can be contacted on 0300 1234510.

Q Can you confirm the eligibility criteria for the Hardship Grant?

Eligibility for Free School Meals based on low income, is as set out below:

- i. A child is eligible to receive Free School Meals, where the household is in receipt of:
 - Universal Credit (where monthly earned income is not more than £610);
 - Income Support;
 - income-based Job Seeker's Allowance;
 - income-based Employment and Support Allowance;
 - support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
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- ii. A child is also eligible to receive Free School Meals, where the household is in receipt of:
 - Child Tax Credit, but not Working Tax Credit, and household income is less than £16,105;
 - both Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit and have an income of up to £7,330.
- iii. A child might still get a free lunch in school if their household experience financial hardship. This could be because:
 - Their immigration status means they cannot get help from the government;
 - They're still waiting on their first Universal Credit notice.

Q I qualify for Early Years Free Meals but I have not received a payment. How can I get one?

For those that have been awarded Early Years Free Meals for 2020/21, we are issuing payments from the information we currently have on file. Applications made before the 30th November will be paid before Christmas.

For those who have applied after the 30th November 2020, payment will be made no later than the second week in January 2021.

If you have not received your payment by 22nd December 2020 please phone 0300 1234510 with your name, your child/ren's name/s and the School they attend, and when you received your award. We will investigate and get back to you.

Q I think I am eligible for the School Clothing Grant/Free School Meals/Early Years Free Meals, but have not previously applied. Can I apply now?

If you are eligible for either a School Clothing Grant or Free School Meals/Free Early Years Meals (**not including the universal provision for P1-P3 or the universal provision in our pilot 1140 Early Years Centres**) but have not yet applied for the 2020/21 school session, you can apply now through our application process, which is now available online.

<https://www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/residents/schools-and-learning/school-meals/free-school-meals>

You must include the evidence to support your claim when you submit the online form. Once your eligibility has been verified, you will be issued with a payment in accordance with the published guidelines.

Q I do not currently get a School Clothing Grant or Free School Meals/free Early Years Meals, but my circumstances have changed as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19). I think I am now entitled, and would therefore be entitled to this support. What should I do?

You should check and see if you are entitled to any Benefits if your circumstances have changed and apply for these in the usual way.

<https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit/eligibility>

Once you have any new benefits you are entitled to confirmed, you can make an application for a School Clothing Grant or Free School Meals/Free Early Years Meals. The application process for these awards are now available online and you should upload your evidence of eligibility when you submit your application form.

<https://www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/residents/schools-and-learning/school-meals/free-school-meals>

You can also seek a referral to the Food Bank if you have no other means of providing food for your family. The new OPAL Helpline **0141 438 2347** established in East Dunbartonshire may be able to help you with this.

You may also be able to apply for a Scottish Welfare Fund Crisis Grant if your circumstances have left you in a difficult position. You can find the details on the Council website: <https://www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/residents/benefits/scottish-welfare-fund>

Q My children are in P1 to P3 and normally get a school lunch in line with the Scottish Government policy for free school meals for P1-P3. Why are we not being allocated a payment?

The provision of universal free school lunches for P1 to P3 is a different commitment to the provision of free school meals as a result of the financial impact COVID-19 is having on parents/carers. The Scottish Government guidance is clear that providing school meals or vouchers during this period does not apply to the universal provision of lunches for all P1-3.

Q What if my child requires to Self-Isolate from School prior to/after the Christmas period?

Payments of Free School Lunches during periods of Isolation will be made up to and including Friday 18th December. Any period of isolation on the 21st/22nd December or the 6th/7th/8th January, will be paid w/c 11th January 2021.