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Guidance

Providing free school meals to families with no recourse to public funds (NRPF)

Updated 13 April 2022

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This publication is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/free-school-meals-guidance-for-schools-and-local-authorities/providing-free-school-meals-to-families-with-no-recourse-to-public-funds-nrpf>

We have permanently extended free school meal eligibility to children in all households with no recourse to public funds (NRPF), subject to maximum income thresholds.

This guidance explains who these groups are and how schools can verify their eligibility and award free school meals.

Schools and local authorities are not able to use the eligibility checking system (ECS) to confirm eligibility for these families as the family will not be in receipt of Universal Credit or legacy benefits.

Eligible groups

These groups include, but may not be limited to children of:

- Zambrano carers
- families who have no recourse to public funds with a right to remain in the UK on grounds of private and family life under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights
- families receiving support under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 who are also subject to a no recourse to public funds restriction
- a subset of failed asylum seekers supported under Section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Chen carers
- families holding a [BN\(O\) passport](https://www.gov.uk/british-national-overseas-bno-visa) (<https://www.gov.uk/british-national-overseas-bno-visa>)
- spousal visa holders
- work visa holders
- student visa holders
- those with no immigration status

The maximum income threshold differs based on your location and the number of children that your family has.

Income thresholds

Under the permanent extension of free school meal eligibility to all NRPF groups, the annual household income thresholds for those families able to work are:

- £22,700 for families outside of London with 1 child
- £26,300 for families outside of London with 2 or more children
- £31,200 for families within London with 1 child
- £34,800 for families within London with 2 or more children

Whether or not a person will be considered within the London or the outside London threshold will be determined by the address of the family.

If the family is living within the local authority of one of the 33 London boroughs, the London thresholds will apply. If the family does not live within one of these local authorities, the outer London thresholds will apply.

This [map](https://www.directory.londoncouncils.gov.uk/) (<https://www.directory.londoncouncils.gov.uk/>) shows the boroughs that form London.

Providing an application form

We have provided a sample application form, including a self-declaration that you can provide to families and carers for verifying eligibility.

Though the form is designed for applicants to complete themselves, we appreciate that individual circumstances may make this difficult, and schools can assist with the completion if required.

Use of the sample application form is not mandatory. You can create your own form if you prefer.

Recording eligible pupils

You should record eligible free school meals pupils who qualify through the **NRPF** criteria in the termly school census, in the same way as all other free school meals pupils.

You should retain evidence of the application including the self-declaration and any supporting documentation for usual audit purposes.

Confirming NRPF status

We have provided examples of how families can demonstrate their **NRPF** status. This list is not necessarily exhaustive and families may be able to provide alternative evidence not listed.

In all cases, the family should complete and sign the self-declaration form confirming both their immigration category and that they are not above the maximum income threshold required for their area.

Article 8 of the ECHR

Families will be able to provide a letter from the Home Office granting them leave to remain in the UK or a biometric residence card.

Section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

Families will be able to provide a letter from the Home Office or local authority confirming Section 4 support or an ASPEN card.

BN(O) passport holders

Families will be able to show either a **BN(O)** passport or visa.

Spouse, work or student visa holders

Families will be able to show their visa.

Zambrano or Chen carers

In many (but not all) cases, the family will be able to show a derivative residence card. If they do not hold this, they must be able to show that:

- the carer or parent is not a British citizen
- the child is a British citizen

- the carer is a direct relative or legal guardian of the child, and they have the primary responsibility for the child
- there are no other members of the carers' family in the UK or the EEA who could look after the child

Confirming income

Check the [income thresholds](#) for your area.

Families should complete a self-declaration of their income as part of their application.

To verify this, we suggest you ask to see one of the following:

- payslip
 - P60
 - bank statement
 - letter from their bank
 - letter from their employer
 - letter from the local authority confirming support if applicable
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