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Free school meals during the Covid-19 outbreak - do you qualify?

Families whose income has reduced or stopped due to the coronavirus (Covid-19) crisis may now qualify for free school meals.

The Isle of Wight Council is urging families to check if their children are eligible as the pandemic creates more hardship.

Children eligible for income-related free school meals are still entitled to receive a school lunch, food parcel or voucher while schools are closed.

Councillor Paul Brading, Cabinet member for children's services, education and skills, said: "Since 27 March, the council has received 94 eligible claims but there could be many more Islanders who qualify.

"We are concerned that families that are now struggling financially because of the Covid-19 outbreak may not realise their child could be eligible for free school meals or where to go for help.

"If your financial situation has changed, please go to our website where you'll find lots of information about free school meals so you can check if you might be eligible."

Am I eligible to receive free school meals for my child?

If you are in receipt of any of the following benefits, you may be eligible to receive free school meals for your child:

- Universal Credit – net earnings threshold of £7,400 from April 2018.

- Income Support.
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance.
- Child Tax Credit – net earnings threshold of £16,190 from April 2018.
- Guarantee element of pension credit.
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
- Where a parent is entitled to Working Tax Credit Run-On.

How to apply

Use the link below to apply and confirm your child's eligibility for free school meals.

<https://www.iow.gov.uk/council/OtherServices/Free-School-Meals/>

You only need to apply once for each child.

If you are found eligible we will send a notification to your child's school, who will contact you. If you are found not eligible, the council will write to request evidence of the qualifying benefit.

If you are a family who previously received free school meals for your child then you should still be receiving these through your school.