

Free School Meals Service – Privacy Notice

This Notice should be read in conjunction with the Council's general Privacy Notice: [Your privacy | Shropshire Council](#)

This Notice provides additional detail relating to the processing of Personal Data in relation to Free School Meals.

Details of information obtained from third parties:

DfE Eligibility Checking System (ECS) – by inputting the applicant's National Insurance/NASS number, date of birth and first three characters of their surname (provided by the applicant) the checking system returns an eligibility result. This identifies if an applicant is eligible to claim free school meals or if we need to view proof of benefit information from the applicant. The result returned by the ECS only provides an equivalent yes or no answer it doesn't provide any other personal details or details of what benefit the applicant is in receipt of.

If we do need to ask for proof of benefit the applicant will need to send us a copy of their benefit letter/award statement to review.

Both sources of information are not from publicly accessible sources.

How is your information used?

Your information will be used to assess whether your child is eligible for free school meals.

Research and statistics

Anonymised and pseudonymised data may be used for research and statistical purposes. Any data collected may be used for research and statistical purposes that are relevant and compatible with the purpose that the data was collected for.

Who has access to your information:

- System Co-ordinator Team for the purpose of processing and maintaining free school meals applications.
- System Support Team.
- Performance and Integration Manager.
- Data and Reporting Analysts.

Who is your information shared with:

We will share your information with:

- Department for Education (via the ECS checking system):

By inputting the applicant's National Insurance Number/NASS Number, date of birth and the first three characters of their surname the ECS system returns a free school meals (FSM) eligibility result.

- Schools:

The child's school will be informed of their FSM eligibility status. When a child transfers schools, details regarding FSM eligibility may also be verified with the new school/LA and the FSM Team.

- School Transport Team:

In some cases, to be eligible for support with school transport costs FSM eligibility is checked.

- Shropshire Music Service:

Students who are eligible for free school meals are able to receive music tuition at a reduced cost.

- Shropshire Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF):

Students who are eligible for free school meals are able to access free holiday activities through the programme.

- Statutory agencies, National Fraud Authority:

We may share your information with statutory agencies in line with our legal obligations and/or in completion of our public tasks.

Other areas of the council if they feel there is other support or services that you are eligible for.

The sharing of information takes place to verify entitlement to free school meals and delivery of the service. You may also be contacted by other areas of the council if they feel there is other support or services that you are eligible for.

We will not sell or rent your information to third parties. We will not share your information with third parties for marketing purposes.

What are your rights in relation the personal data we process?

Please refer to the main notice for this information.

How long will we keep your information for?

We keep and dispose of all records in line with our corporate retention schedule. We will comply with Data Protection legislation in regards to how long we keep your data.

What security precautions in place to protect the loss, misuse or alteration of

your information?

We are strongly committed to data security and will take reasonable and appropriate steps to protect your personal information from unauthorised access, loss, misuse, alteration or corruption. We have put in place physical, electronic, and managerial procedures to safeguard the information you provide to us. However, we cannot guarantee the security of any information you transmit to us. We recommend that you take every precaution to protect your personal information.

Keeping your data up to date

We want to ensure any information we hold is accurate. You can help us by promptly informing us of any changes to the information we hold about you.

Details of any automated decision processes

When free school meals applications are being processed there is a direct link to DWP data (ECS checking system) to confirm if the entitlement criteria is met. This is to ensure accurate decisions using current data. It also means that in the majority of cases the applicant doesn't need to supply supporting documents.

Under 13

If you are accessing online services and are under the age of 13, please get your parent/guardian's permission beforehand whenever you provide us with personal information.

Complaints and concerns about the handling of your personal information:

Please refer to the main notice for this detail.

This Notice was last updated on:

6 September 2025