

Privacy Notice for Free School Meals



Nottingham City Council Information Compliance

Service Area: Delivery
Directorate: Finance & Resources
PN-0323

06/2026

Free School Meals are a statutory benefit available to school-aged children from families who receive certain qualifying benefits. Younger children may also be eligible for Free School Meals if they attend a local authority nursery school or nursery class and attend full days.

Nottingham City Council administers the Free School Meal scheme for eligible children in Nottingham on behalf of the Government. We also provide food vouchers (from the Household Support Fund) to ensure families of children who are eligible for free school meals during term time are able to purchase food during the holidays to replace the meals their child would have received during the school day.

We will use the information provided by you for a number of reasons, depending on the service or reasons for interacting with you. This includes:

- check whether your child is entitled to Free School Meals through a data matching exercise (known as opt-out auto-award)
- to provide you with the opportunity to opt out of this process.
- notify your child's school of their entitlement to Free School Meals
- provide food vouchers to support families during the school holidays
- deal with any complaints or concerns
- detect fraud and protect public funds

If you apply for a Free School Meal online, you provide this information to us directly. Someone else (for example school staff, a social worker, your GP or Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)) can also apply on your behalf.

When we process your personal information, we will comply with data protection legislation and enable you to exercise your rights contained within the legislation.

What personal information will the Council process?

The information that we collect about you to fulfil the purposes, objectives, or to deliver the services outlined above will relate to: (this may include all, or some of the following, depending on the service).

- your contact details (name, address, telephone number and email address)
- details about you (date of birth, national insurance number)
- details about your child (name, date of birth, gender, school and year group)
- if you have declared a partner on your claim for benefits we may also use details about them (date of birth, national insurance number and gender) to ensure we have matched the correct family on our systems

Lawful basis for processing

The basis under which we use your personal information for these purposes is that this is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest by the Council or in the exercise of official authority vested in the Council

This is a result of the powers or duties contained in:

- We are allowed by law to provide Free School Meals to eligible children in Nottingham under Section 512ZB of the Education Act 1996 and Localism Act 2011, Section 1.
- Local authorities have the power to act innovatively to meet community needs, including offering Free School Meals to pupils whose families receive

benefits. This enables the Council to invest in and benefit all children by ensuring access to nutritious meals (Localism Act 2011, Section 1)

We do not process your data under consent, but parent or carers may opt out of this process. If you do not opt out, your child will be enrolled to receive free school meals.

Will my information be shared with other organisations or used for other purposes?

The Council will only share your personal information with other departments within the Council, and with other organisations when it is necessary to provide the services to you, and when we have a lawful reason to do so. The Council may also share your information when we are obliged to by law.

In relation to this service, the Council may share your personal information with:

- Your child's school or early years provider to let them know that your child has been awarded a Free School Meal
- Other departments within this NCC as deemed necessary
- The Department for Education's Free School Meals checking service
- If you move to a different local authority, we may also need to share information with them (this is to confirm that your child was awarded Free School Meals in Nottingham).

The information may also be used for the purpose of any other function carried out by the Council. This may include sharing your information across the Council, or with external organisations. Information about these functions and the legal basis on which information is used for them can be found at <http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/privacy-statement/>

The information will only be used for another purpose where it is lawful to do so.

Opt-out auto-award

We also carry out a data matching exercise (known as opt-out auto-award) to identify children who are entitled to Free School Meals, but not receiving them. We will collect

information from the School Census and parent/carers records from schools and academies. We will match this to data from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to confirm entitlement.

Parent/carers will be given the opportunity to opt out of this process. If they do not opt out, their child will be enrolled to receive free school meals.

Further information about this can be found [here](#).

How long will the Council retain the data for?

The information that you have provided will be kept for the retention period stated in our Information Asset Register.

The Council publish an Information Asset Register (IAR), this will outline the retention periods for the personal data we process. You can find this IAR on our website <https://geoserver.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/information-asset-register/>

Information Rights

The UK General Data Protection Regulation provides for the following rights as prescribed by the legislation:

A right to request a copy of your information

A right to request rectification of inaccurate personal data

A right to request erasure of your data known as 'the right to be forgotten'

A right to in certain circumstances to request restriction of processing

A right in certain circumstances to request portability of your data to another provider

A right to object to processing of data in certain circumstances

A right regarding automated decision-making including profiling

However, Nottingham City Council can restrict the above rights in certain circumstances for example to avoid obstructing an investigation, avoid prejudicing the prevention, detection, investigation or prosecution of criminal penalties or to protect the rights and freedoms of others.

Data Protection Officer

You can contact the data protection officer at:

Loxley House,
Station Street,
Nottingham,
NG2 3NG

or at data.protectionofficer@nottinghamcity.gov.uk .

Information Commissioner's Office

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) website provides guidance on data protection and privacy matters, you can visit the website at www.ico.org.uk. You also have the right to complain to the ICO if you consider that the Council have processed your personal data incorrectly or that we have breached our obligations to you. You can contact the ICO at:

Wycliffe House,
Water Lane
Wilmslow,
Cheshire
SK95AF

www.ico.org.uk

Further Information

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For more information about these rights please refer to our detailed privacy statement at <https://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/privacy-statement> .