



Service Level Agreement 2024-2025

Southampton Schools and Academies

Free School Meals

1. Introduction

This Service Level Agreement (SLA) is between the school governing body / Academy and the Data, Intelligence, and Insight Team (known as the 'Data Team') on behalf of Southampton City Council.

This Service Level Agreement is for the period 01/04/2024 to 31/03/2025. Any services bought during the SLA period outlined above will be charged at the full rate as outlined in this document.

Schools have a responsibility to submit accurate Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility for their pupils on a termly basis with the statutory School Census. This can be quite a time-consuming task for school staff and an inconvenience for parents/carers to provide this evidence regularly. The FSM SLA offered by the Data Team provides a comprehensive service that streamlines eligibility checking and helps ensure schools receive the maximum possible funding through FSM6 Pupil Premium allocations.

2. Service Options

The Data Team offer the FSM eligibility checking service to schools. Schools have the responsibility of ensuring permissions are given for these checks to be completed by the team.

The FSM eligibility checking will be completed either by:

Free School Meal Checking Service Level Agreement	
The availability of an online checking tool for parents/carers of the pupils in subscribing schools, with the results being accessible to schools. Regular re-checks will take place via the automated system.	✓
Batch checks: The Data Team will run a routine through the DfE's Eligibility Checking Service (ECS), which will return either a True or False result for each claimant. These results will be passed back to the school through a secure means. Batch checks will be performed on a termly basis with a maximum submission of 2 batches a term. Schools must ensure data is formatted correctly and essential data items are not missing to avoid resubmissions of the same data which will count as a submission. If the form submitted is not in the correct format it will not be processed.	✓
The Data Team will carry out additional manual checks via the DfE to scrutinise the DWP and HMRC records where there is reasonable doubt that the False eligibility returned via a batch check should be True. Additional information needed to action these manual checks will be requested at that time and will need to be collated by the school.	✓
Follow up using in-depth DWP checks if a parent insists their child is eligible for FSM.	✓
NEW – The Data Team will carry out additional checks to ensure that pupils moving schools, including cross border school moves continue to be identified as FSM eligible. The Data Team will combine all historic Census records covering the FSM transitional protection period to help your school identify pupils that may have dropped their FSM status incorrectly when arriving at your school from another establishment.	✓

The OFSM system is completely paperless and follows the SCC principle of residents, or in this case schools on behalf of residents (parents), being self-serving by accessing this service online, getting an immediate response and is accessible 24/7.

3. Pricing

Please note that initial analysis of the 'New' FSM services outlined in section 2 have been very positive and identified in excess of 300 potential additional FSM pupils. As any additional Primary and Secondary pupils identified as FSM eligible will generate £1,455 and £1,035 in the first year of identification alone (based on pupil premium FSM allocations for 2023-24), the longer term impact of these new processes and associated additional income are clear. Due to the additional staffing associated with these new checks it has been necessary to increase the FSM price by £1, the first increase in five years. The identification of just 1 additional pupil at your school will far exceed the change in price.

£3.60 per child attending your school that is eligible for free school meals as at the Autumn 2023 census.

Example: A school has 110 pupils eligible for FSM as at the Autumn 2023 census.

Cost of FSM SLA 2024/25 = $110 \times £3.60 = \underline{£396}$

4. Service Contact

Any queries, concerns or complaints about the overall operation of the scheme should be addressed to:

Dan King – Dan.King@southampton.gov.uk	Head of Data, Intelligence and Insight	023 8083 2493
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