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| Date  | **12th February 2020** | **Department:** | Children, Learning and Skills  |
|  | **Contact Name:** | Paul Brotherton |
|  | **Contact No:** | 01753 875744 |
|  | **Email:** | paul.brotherton@slough.gov.uk |
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FAO: Free School Meal Administrators and School Business Managers

Dear Colleague,

**Free School Meal Eligibility Checking Service 2020-21**

Thank you to those schools who signed up to our Free School Meals Eligibility Checking Service in 2019/20. The existing service level agreement (SLA) expires on 31st March 2020.

We are pleased to be able to offer the service again in 2020/21- the charge remains unchanged at £500 per school. If your school would like to retain membership to, or indeed join the service for 2020/21, please complete and return the enclosed SLA by **Friday 13th March 2020**.

Any school not joining the SLA for 2020/21 will no longer be able to utilise any aspect of our service from 1st April 2020 onwards.

Full details of the service offer can be found within the enclosed SLA. However, the key benefits are:

* All FSM applications made in school can be transferred to and processed by LA staff.
* Parents of children attending a member school can also apply online via the Slough Borough Council website.
* Schools can send details of previously ineligible applicants to the LA on a termly basis for reassessment – parents and children could benefit from newly acquired eligibility whilst schools would benefit from additional Pupil Premium funding.
* Member schools can send a maximum of 2 delegates to an FSM overview and awareness session to be held on a date to be agreed.
* Member schools receive a suite of documentation and can request advice, guidance or complex case management from LA based experts.

Finally, I have also enclosed a simple feedback form so schools can provide me with feedback on the existing service, for example, what works well, what could be improved, and any other suggestions or comments you’d like to inform us of. There is no obligation to complete the feedback form, but all comments are welcome, so please do return it to me if you’re willing to participate.

Thank you, and I hope to welcome you back to our service from 1st April 2020.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Brotherton

Systems and School Support Manager

Slough Borough Council

**Service Level Agreement**

**Free School Meal (FSM) Eligibility Checking**

**Contact information**

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| **Description** | **Name** | **Contact Details** |
| General FSM enquiries | FSM Eligibility Checking Service | fsm.admin@slough.gov.uk |
| FSM specialist advice and guidance | Paul BrothertonSystems and School Support Manager | paul.brotherton@slough.gov.ukTel: 01753 875744 |
| Anjum JavaidSystems and Information Officer | anjum.javaid@slough.gov.ukTel: 01753 476576 |
| Service Level Agreement queries | Paul BrothertonSystems and School Support Manager | paul.brotherton@slough.gov.ukTel: 01753 875744 |

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| **Summary of Service** |
| A full free school meals eligibility checking and advice service – schools receive:* A service via which FSM applications made in school can be submitted to the LA for assessment.
* Notification of the current benefit related eligibility status of applicants who have applied directly to the school.
* Notification of the current benefit related eligibility status of applicants who have applied directly to the LA.
* The option to have all previously ineligible applicants re-assessed by the LA each term (termly batch re-check process).
* Access to knowledgeable LA staff who can provide advice and guidance on complex issues.
* Attendance for a maximum of 2 people at an overview session during the SLA year.
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| **Funding** |
| This is a traded service funded by schools. |
| **Links with other services** |
| This is a standalone service. |
| **Service Users** |
| All schools including Academies can use this service. |
| **Service** |
| This service runs from 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021. |
| **Service Standards** |
| SLA staff will:* Issue process documentation for schools, providing guidance on how to access the FSM eligibility service
* Issue template FSM application forms which schools can use / modify to capture data from applicants
* Issue the template FSM master spreadsheet, required for completion of batch checks
* Provide support, advice and guidance to nominated school FSM staff
* Issue reminders to schools of FSM master spreadsheet return dates
* Process ad-hoc applications and return results via S2S messaging
* Process batch check spreadsheets which are submitted timely and accurately and return to schools via S2S generic file upload
* Maintain an online application service for parents to apply directly to the LA if preferred
* Continually assess and develop systems and processes in order to improve the service
* Retain an overview of government legislation and guidance and communicate any changes
* Respond to all correspondence, whether written or verbal, within 10 working days

Processing timescales* FSM master spreadsheets should be returned, when prompted, before the end of each term. Results will be sent back to schools ready for the start of the following term. Any batch spreadsheets submitted after the end of term deadline will not be processed.
* FSM ad-hoc check requests via S2S – processed within 10 working days
* Online applications made directly via SBC website – processed within 10 working days
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| **School responsibilities** |
| Member schools will:* Read and fully understand all process documentation and communication provided, raising queries at the earliest opportunity should anything be unclear
* At all times, ensure at least 2 members of staff are capable of maintaining the school’s responsibilities with regards to this agreement (thereby ensuring continuity of service)
* Attempt to gather relevant data e.g. DOB, NI number from parents, maximising the likelihood of obtaining data which can be used for eligibility assessments
* Ensure data collection sheets, application forms and privacy notices make reference to the purpose data will be used for and the school’s Data Protection procedures
* Return all FSM master spreadsheets by the deadline date stipulated (late returns will not be processed)
* Not alter the formatting or column headers on the master spreadsheet templates in any way
* Input data onto the spreadsheet templates in the correct format. Any spreadsheets containing inaccuracies will be returned to the school for correction before processing takes place.
* Ensure the master spreadsheets sent each term contains all new applications **and** those previous applicants who as far as you are aware are currently ineligible (currently eligible applicants will not need to have their eligibility re-assessed at least until the government has completed the roll out of Universal Credit).
* Send in-term ad-hoc requests (maximum 5 children) using the S2S messaging functionality on Secure Access
* Promote the benefits of applying for Free School Meals via newsletters, e-mails, website links etc.
* Upon receipt of eligibility information from the LA, notify those parents who applied directly to the school whether or not they are eligible.
* Record all free school meal eligibility dates within the school’s Management Information System.
* NOT record an end date for FSM eligibility without first checking with the LA.
* Be responsible for obtaining CTFs and other documentation from a child’s previous schools in order to determine whether a pupil qualifies for FSM under the government’s Transitional Protection scheme.
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| **Monitoring & Evaluation** |
| The service will continue to evaluate current processes and procedures to ensure maximum efficiency for parents, schools and FSM administration staff. |
| **Cost of the Service** |
| The cost of the service is £500 for the period 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021. Maintained schools will have their charge collected via SBC Finance. Maintained/Free Schools will be invoiced. |

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Role:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Please also provide the name and e-mail address of the 2 staff members nominated to be FSM administrators.

**Lead Free School Meal Administrator:**

Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Second Free School Meal Administrator**:

Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

E-mail:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

If you require a purchase order / reference number including on your invoice / SBC finance transaction, please provide it below:

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Please return your completed SLA to paul.brotherton@slough.gov.uk ASAP.

**Free School Meals Eligibility Checking Service – Feedback Form**

We’d like to hear from you!

We’d be very grateful if you could spend a few minutes providing us with feedback relating to the “Free School Meals Eligibility Checking Service” we provide. Any and all feedback is important to us, so please do complete the form below and e-mail to: paul.brotherton@slough.gov.uk.

**What works well?**

**What could be improved?**

**What else would you like the service to provide?**

**Any other comments**

Thank you for your time.