

# Free School Meals

## Instant approval from the ECS web-service

Local Authority users of the Victoria Forms solution can use the Department for Education Eligibility Checking Service (ECS) to evaluate the eligibility of new applications without the need for claimants to provide evidence of qualifying benefits (the ECS checks against data held by HMRC, DWP and the Home Office). The ECS service has recently been expanded to check eligibility for Free School Meals, Funded Early Learning for Two Year Olds and Early Years Pupil Premium.

An analytical advancement to the service provided by the ECS to Local Authorities is to allow applicants to check their own eligibility via the self-service channel and therefore reduce administrative overheads. Working in collaboration with Waltham Forest Council, Victoria Forms have created a standardised eForm that allows applicants to see their eligibility and obtain a confirmation letter (print out or a PDF copy) in real time after submitting their eForm. In theory, this powerful dynamic allows children of the applicant to receive their meal entitlement within 24 hours of eligibility being confirmed.

### Step 1

- Applicants use the self service eForm to submit an application. Validation ensures the form is completed without omissions

### Step 2

- eForm data is sent over a secure connection to ECS web-service checker

### Step 3

- ECS web-service returns check result to the eForm

### Step 4

- If eligible, the applicant can print / save (PDF format) a confirmation letter to provide to the applicable school

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the 'FREE SCHOOL MEALS' application form for Waltham Forest. The form includes the following sections:

- Header:** 'FREE SCHOOL MEALS' and 'Waltham Forest Only' on the left, and the Waltham Forest logo on the right.
- Introduction:** 'If you would like your child to receive free school meals, please fill in this form and submit it online. If you give us your email address we will send you an automated email to confirm receipt of your form.'
- Contact Information:** 'Revenues and Benefits Service, London Borough of Waltham Forest, PO Box 856, London, E17 9PN'.
- Partner Question:** 'Do you have a partner?' with 'No' (selected) and 'Yes' radio buttons.
- Benefit Question:** 'Are you a pupil receiving Income Support or Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance and claiming free school meals for yourself?' with 'No' (selected) and 'Yes' radio buttons.
- School Information:** 'If yes, please enter the name and address of the school you attend.' with two text input fields.
- Name Fields:** Two columns for 'You' and 'Your partner' with 'Surname or family name' and 'Other names' input fields.

Waltham Forest Free School Meals application form