

Free School Meals (Automatic Registration of Eligible Children) Bill

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Provide local authorities with the duties and powers required to identify and automatically register all children eligible for free school meals; to provide for an opt-out where the family wishes; and for connected purposes.

BE IT ENACTED by the Queen’s most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

1 Free school meals: duty to identify qualifying children

- (1) A local education authority must identify each child of school age in its area who is eligible for free school meals (a “qualifying child”).
- (2) The Secretary of State must, by regulations, provide—
 - (a) local education authorities, and
 - (b) any other relevant departments or agencieswith the powers necessary to obtain and exchange the information necessary for local education authorities to carry out the duty in subsection (1).

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2 Qualifying children: duty to inform schools

- (1) A local education authority must provide a relevant school with sufficient information collected under section 1 to enable them to carry out the duty in section 3 (subject only to section 4).
- (2) For the purposes of this Act, a school is “relevant” to a local education authority if that school has on its pupil roll a qualifying child resident within that local education authority’s area.

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3 Free school meals: duty to provide to qualifying children

- (1) A state-funded school has a duty to provide a free school meal to every qualifying child whether identified to the relevant school by a local education authority or not (subject only to section 4).

- (2) A state-funded school which identifies a qualifying child whose eligibility for free school meals has not been identified by a local education authority must inform the appropriate authority that this is the case.

4 Free school meals: opting out

- (1) Local education authorities must provide the means for a parent or guardian of a qualifying child to opt out of the arrangements envisaged in sections 1 to 3. 5
- (2) State-funded schools must make arrangements for parents or guardians of qualifying children to be able to gain access to the means provided by local education authorities under subsection (1).

5 Free school meals: confidentiality

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Local education authorities and schools must take all reasonable steps to preserve the confidentiality and right to privacy of qualifying children and their parents or guardians in respect of the information, information-sharing and administrative arrangements provided, or required, for the purposes of this Act.

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6 Extent, commencement and citation.

- (1) This Act extends to England and Wales.
- (2) This Act comes into force on the day after the day on which it receives Royal Assent.
- (3) This Act may be cited as the Free School Meals (Automatic Registration of Eligible Children Act 2016. 20

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To provide local authorities with the duties and powers required to identify and automatically register all children eligible for free school meals; to provide for an opt-out where the family wishes; and for connected purposes.

*Ordered to be brought in by Frank Field,
John Glen, Mr Philip Hollobone,
Alison McGovern, Andrew Bridgen,
Peter Kyle, Wes Streeting,
Sir Nicholas Soames, Ms Karen Buck,
Stella Creasy, Heidi Allen and
Mr Christopher Chope.*

*Ordered, by The House of Commons,
to be Printed, 15 December 2015.*

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