

Free school meals

Notes of guidance and
application form



You can apply online at

www.essex.gov.uk/educationawards

Free school meals

Notes of guidance - Please keep these notes for reference

Legal Background

Free School Meals are administered by the Local Authority and the qualifying rules are decided by Central Government.

Do you Qualify?

Parents or guardians receiving the following benefits can use this form to claim Free School Meals.

- Income Support
- Jobseekers Allowance (Income Based)
- **Income Related** Employment & Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit with an annual taxable income of less than £16,190
- Pension Guarantee Credit
- Support under Part VI Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

You will not normally be eligible for Free School Meals if you receive any amount of Working Tax Credit.

However, if you have recently become unemployed you may be entitled to a short term 4 week award while your entitlement to Child Tax Credit is assessed. If you wish to apply on this basis, you will need to enclose a copy of your Tax Credits Decision Notice with your application. This can be obtained from the HM Revenue & Customs helpline **0845 300 3900**.

Free School Meals can only be given on the basis of a completed and approved application and cannot be backdated.

If your benefit ceases, your annual taxable income increases to over £16,190 or you are awarded Working Tax Credit, your child does not then qualify for free meals and you

must let Education Transport and Awards know immediately. You will be required to repay the money to the school for meals taken if you continue to claim them when your child is no longer entitled.

School Transport Information

If you are eligible for free school meals you may also be entitled to school transport. Transport assistance can be provided if your child is attending one of the nearest three secondary schools providing they are between 2 and 6 miles from your home address by the shortest available route.

For more information or an application form please contact **0845 603 2200**.

Application Process

When an application has been agreed we will send a letter to the parent or carer and notify the school.

Applications have to be renewed every academic year. If you have provided your Name, National Insurance number or National Asylum Seekers reference number and date of birth, we will check your eligibility against central benefit records. If we are unable to obtain confirmation of your continued eligibility, we will write to you to request paper proof of benefit.

Personal Visits

If you wish to make a personal visit, please contact us beforehand to make an appointment. Appointments can be fixed very quickly and easily by telephoning the number given on the back of this form.

Continued on the inside back cover ▶▶

Free school meals application

For use from 1 April 2011.

Please complete and detach this form and return to the address on page 2.

Family Reference:

* Parent Name:

SECTION 1 PUPIL AND PARENT DETAILS

Pupil Details

Please name all dependent children (under 17 years old) who you wish to claim for, who are not receiving benefits in their own right:

| Surname | First Name | Date of Birth | | | School Name |
|---------|------------|---------------|---|---|-------------|
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Have your dependent children previously received Free School Meals? Yes No

Please state reference number if you know it:

Parent/Carer Details

This needs to be the person who is claiming benefits for the household.

Surname

First Name(s)

Preferred title (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms)

Relationship to pupil(s)

Your National Insurance Number or National Asylum Seekers Reference Number

| | | | | | | | | | |
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| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|

Your Date of birth

Day Month Year

Address:

| |
|----------------------|
| <input type="text"/> |
| <input type="text"/> |

Postcode

Telephone number where you can be contacted during the day:

Which Authority is your Council Tax payable to? (e.g. Braintree District Council)
Please answer even if you do not pay council tax

Do you currently receive free school transport?

Yes No

SECTION 2 - DECLARATION

Declaration by Parent/Carer

I confirm that the information given is correct. I agree to notify Essex County Council – Education Transport and Awards immediately if my child should fail for any reason to attend the school for any reason, for any part of the term covered by the award, or if my benefit ceases. I understand that Essex County Council may use the information provided on this form for the detection and prevention of fraud. I confirm that I am responsible for the child(ren) named on this form and that he/she lives/they live with me.

I agree that you can use the information I have provided to process my claim for free school meals and will contact other sources as allowed by law to verify my initial, and ongoing entitlement.

I understand that the results of any free school meals eligibility check may also be used to assess my entitlement to school transport (if applicable).

I understand that my application will need to be renewed at the end of the academic year and I agree to provide new evidence of benefit entitlement if I am requested to do so.

I will inform you if I change my address.

Signed

Date

**When you have completed this form,
please pull out and return to:**

**Education Transport & Awards
PO Box 4261
Chelmsford
CM1 1GS**

How we check entitlement to free school meals

We will use the National Insurance number and date of birth information you have supplied to check your entitlement to free meals with the Department for Education Eligibility Checking Service. If we are unable to determine entitlement using this service, we will write to you to request paper proof of benefit.

Please check that you have correctly entered your National Insurance number and

date of birth on the application form as if they are incorrect, the ECS will not be able to determine entitlement and this will delay your application.

Please note if you have recently become unemployed, we cannot check your interim Tax Credits decision notice using this service. You must enclose a copy of this document with your application.

You do not need to submit paper evidence with your initial application unless you have recently become unemployed and are applying for a 4 week award. If we are unable to determine your entitlement using the Eligibility Checking Service, we will write to you to request it.

When to use this form

We administer free school meals for Essex schools, including some academies. If your child's school is an academy, please check with the school before applying to Essex County Council.

For schools outside of Essex, please contact the school for details on how to apply.

For more information please contact:

By Post:

Education Transport & Awards
PO Box 4261
Chelmsford
CM1 1GS

By Telephone:

0845 603 2200

By Email:

educationawards@essex.gov.uk

Website:

www.essex.gov.uk/educationawards

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