

Free Meal Allowance Policy

1. What is the Free Meal Allowance?

The 1996 Education Act requires maintained schools and academy sixth forms to provide free meals to disadvantaged students who are aged over 16.

Institutions must make a free meal available for all eligible students for each day the student attends their study programme, where this is appropriate.

Institutions receive funding at a rate equivalent to £2.41 per student per meal.

Where institutions receive funding for both free meals in further education and 16 to 19 Bursary Fund discretionary bursary, they may use the funding as a single allocation.

2. Eligibility

A student must be aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August of relevant academic year to be eligible to receive a free meal.

Students aged 19 or over are only eligible to receive a free meal if they are continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers') or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

These 2 groups of aged 19 plus students can receive a free meal while they continue to attend education (in the case of a 19+ continuer, this must be the same programme they started before they turned 19), as long as their eligibility continues.

The following groups of students are not eligible for free meals in further education:

- a) students aged 19 or over at the start of their study programme unless they have an EHCP or are a 19+ continuer.
- b) apprentices, including those with an EHCP

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3. Policy Aims

- To ensure that the Free Meal Allowance is administered in accordance with DfE/ESFA guidelines and policies.
- To explain the procedure for making applications including eligibility criteria, how the bursary is calculated and payment processes.

4. Proof of income

Evidence of certain benefits will be required to support an application for free meal allowance. Please see the application form for the eligible evidence.

5. How will the college assess applications and allocate 16-19 Bursary funding?

All students who are eligible should be paid free meal allowance.

Students who are eligible should complete an application form and hand it to Business Support Team as close to the start of a new academic year as possible. However, applications can be made at any time during the year, as some courses start at different times.

The application form is available from the Business Support Team or from the link below.

In line with ESFA guidelines, the college has the option to charge a 5% administration fee from the fund.

6. How is the Free Meal Allowance paid?

Students receive £2.41 for each day they are in a full day's training. This can be paid by cash on a weekly, 2 weekly or monthly basis. Or it can be paid along with the 16 – 19 Discretionary Bursary into the student's account on a monthly basis.

Students must sign for any cash allowances paid.

Please complete the [Free meal allowance application form 2022 - 2023.doc](#) This form is also available from the Business Support Team.

If you have any queries, please contact the Business Support Team at: admin.rta@reynoldsgroup.co.uk or 01322 275807.