



Chadsgrove Educational Trust

Information for the Provision of Free College Meals

Purpose

The government provides funding for the provision of free meals for learners who qualify for the assistance.

For the 2025 to 2026 academic year the rate set is £2.61 per learner per meal taken. The meal is provided where a learner attends College over the lunchtime period.

Where needed reasonable adjustments will be made for special dietary requirements.

As Chadsgrove Specialist College receives funding for both free meals 16 to 19 Bursary Fund discretionary bursary, we have the flexibility to use the funding as a single allocation.

Eligibility

Age

Learners must be aged 19 or over on 31 August 2025 and have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

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

- Learners aged 19 or over at the start of their study programme who do not have an EHCP
- Apprentices, including those with an EHCP

Residency

Learners must also satisfy the residency criteria set out in the DfE [funding regulations guidance](#).

Eligible benefits

Free meals are targeted at disadvantaged learners. Free meals in further education defines disadvantage as learners being in receipt of, or having parents who are in receipt of, one or more of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190, as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC))

- Working Tax Credit **run-on only** – paid for 4 weeks after someone stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit (UC) with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400 for each year (after tax and not including any benefits they get)

Working Tax Credit is not a qualifying benefit for free meals, and a parent or student in receipt of Working Tax Credits is not entitled to a free meal. Qualifying benefits do include the Working Tax Credit run-on which is paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit.

A student is only eligible to receive a free meal when they, or a responsible adult on their behalf, have made a successful application by completing an Application Form for the Provision of Free College Meals (see Appendix 1) and returning it to Chadsgrove Specialist College office staff.

Application Process

A student is only eligible to receive a free meal when they, or a parent/guardian on their behalf, have made a successful application to the College.

Please complete an application form and supply the necessary evidence so that the College can consider the application.

The College Administrator will check the application and submit the documentation to the Principal and/or Finance Director for authorisation.

The outcome of the decision will be advised in writing.

Complaints process

All complaints must be made in writing. If the complaint concerns an operational process or a complaint about service this will be dealt with under the Chadsgrove Educational Trust complaints procedure.

If the complaint or appeal is not resolved then it will be passed to the Department for Education (DfE)

