

Employers For Childcare

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Free School Meals and School Uniform Allowance

Please note: The information provided in this factsheet only applies to pupils attending school in Northern Ireland. If your child attends school in England or Wales visit:

www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals or in Scotland visit:

www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/Schools/HLivi/schoolmeals/FreeSchoolMeals for further information.

The Education Authority in Northern Ireland provides some pupils in full-time education with Free School Meals and School Uniform Allowances. The Education Authority (EA) is responsible for assessing eligibility based on Department of Education (DE) / Department for the Economy (DfE) criteria.

Is my child eligible for a School Uniform Allowance?

You can apply for School Uniform Allowance for children attending Primary, Secondary, Grammar, Voluntary Grammar, Integrated Secondary and Special Schools. Allowance for Physical Education (P.E.) clothing for students doing P.E. at Institutions of Further and Higher Education can also be claimed. Children attending mainstream Nursery schools/ Nursery Units or Reception Classes are not entitled to this help.

Parents who are receiving any of the following benefits will be entitled to receive a School Uniform Allowance for their child:

- Income Support
- Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- The Guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit or Working Tax Credits with an annual gross income of £16,190 or less
- Universal credit with annual net earnings not exceeding £14,000.

Parents will also be entitled to apply for a School Uniform Allowance if they are an asylum seeker supported by the Home Office under the National Asylum Support Assessment Team

(ASAT). A pupil who is in receipt of Income Support in their own name is also entitled to receive a School Uniform Allowance.

How much will I receive?

The current School Uniform Allowance rates are as follows:

Mainstream primary school pupils, (born on or before 1 July 2013), including P.E. allowance	£35.75 per year
Post-primary and special school uniform allowance (aged under 15 on 01/08/2017)	£51.00 per year
Post-primary and special school uniform allowance (aged 15 or over on 01/08/2017)	£56.00 per year
Post-primary and special school P.E. Allowance	£22.00 per year

School Uniform Allowances are paid by cheque or directly into a bank account. The allowance is only a contribution towards the cost of school uniforms and will not cover the full amount.

Only one School Uniform Allowance per pupil can be paid during the school year.

Is my child eligible for Free School Meals?

The eligibility criteria for Free School Meals is similar to School Uniform Allowances, with additional children qualifying who have a statement of special educational needs and who are designated to require a special diet. Additionally, you can apply for free school meals if your child is in full-time nursery school/nursery unit/reception class. However, your child will not be eligible for a uniform allowance. Children attending part-time nursery school/nursery unit/reception class are not eligible for free school meals or a uniform allowance.

You cannot receive a monetary allowance instead of your child receiving Free School Meals.

How do I apply for Free School Meals or Uniform Allowance?

Application forms are available from the Education Authority. You may also be able to pick one up at your child's school or college, your local Social Security Agency Office or your local Citizens Advice Bureau, or by clicking the download link below:

<http://www.eani.org.uk/resources/assets/attachment/full/0/59181.pdf>

Notes related to the application process are available via the link below:

<http://www.eani.org.uk/resources/assets/attachment/full/0/59184.pdf>

Completed forms which meet all criteria will be processed in the order of the date received by the Education Authority.

Make sure you read the notes accompanying the application form. The notes provide useful information including the responsibility of a claimant when making a claim and the current clothing allowance rates. Complete the form, provide verification of any benefits that you are in receipt of and return it to the address provided on the form.

Foster carers who are in receipt of funding are not eligible to make an application for free school meals and uniform allowance.

Contact details for the Education Authority

The Education Authority's website is: www.eani.org.uk

Alternatively, you can phone your local Meals and Uniform service within the Education Authority:

Armagh	028 3751 2523
Ballymena	028 2566 1355
Belfast	028 9056 4000
Dundonald	028 9056 6200
Omagh	028 8241 1496

For further information or advice on any other entitlements for parents and families, please call our Family Benefits Advice Service on 0800 028 3008.