

## A Guide to Further Education Free Meals

### Student Eligibility

Free meals are targeted at disadvantaged students. For the purposes of eligibility for free meals, 'disadvantaged' is defined by the students 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 that 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
- Working Tax Credit run-on, paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400 per annum (after tax and not including any benefits received).
- A student is only eligible to receive a free meal when they, or a parent/guardian on their behalf, have made a successful application.

### Verification of Student Eligibility

Hampshire County Council Catering Services (HC3S) has launched an online service so parents can check their eligibility for free school meals. This self-service option is available [here](#). Click on the Free Meals for College Students option. To apply online, all you need to do is enter your name, National Insurance number or asylum number, your address and your child's details. Press 'submit' and you will find out if you are eligible.

**If your result comes back 'Found'**, this means your child is eligible for free school meals and the system automatically tells the College.

**If your result comes back 'Pending/Not Found'**, and you think you are eligible for Further Education Free School meals, you will need to provide evidence of this for College. The College will then contact HC3S and a decision will be made with regard to eligibility.

If you **do not have access to the online service**, you can contact the College by calling the Health and Wellbeing Co-ordinator, Kirsten Halvorsen on 01252 688351 (term time) or email: [bursary\\_and\\_free\\_meals@farnborough.ac.uk](mailto:bursary_and_free_meals@farnborough.ac.uk). Assistance will then be given to make an application.

Transitional Protection Arrangements have been implemented until the end of the academic year 2025 to 2026, to provide certainty for families and to ensure that they do not experience a sudden loss of free meals during the roll out of Universal Credit. These protection arrangements apply as follows:

- All students already receiving free meals at 1 April 2018 will continue to receive free meals until the end of the academic year 2025 to 2026. This will apply even if their household earnings rise above the new threshold in that time
- Any student who becomes eligible for free meals after the threshold has been introduced will also continue to receive free meals until the end of the academic year 2025 to 2026. This will apply even if they subsequently become ineligible during this period because their household earnings rise above the new threshold.

## Entitlement

- Students will be allocated £3.70 per day which will be loaded onto their College ID card. They can then use their ID card to purchase food from the College's catering outlets using the cashless system.
- The daily award cannot be exchanged for a cash alternative except in exceptional circumstances or if the student is on work experience.
- The daily award cannot be carried forward to the next day.
- Students will be encouraged to make healthy food choices, however, actual purchases will not be monitored.

*Please enquire if you need this information in an alternative format.*