

If you are aged between 16 and 18 and receive any of these benefits in your own right, you can claim free school meals for yourself.

You may also be eligible for free school meals if you are an asylum seeker and receive support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

To claim free school meals contact your child's school or your local authority's education department.



To find out more about the changes that are taking place:

- Contact your child's school
- Check out the report of the expert panel on school meals on the school meals website at www.scotland.gov.uk/education/schoolmeals

For advice on healthy eating:

- Contact the healthy eating hotline on **08452 78 88 78**
- Go to the healthy eating website at www.healthyliving.gov.uk

To find out more about claiming free school meals contact your child's school or your local authority's education department.

If you need copies of this leaflet in braille, on audio tape, or in your own first language, please contact us at the address below.

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You can also get this document on our website at www.scotland.gov.uk

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Do you know what's happening to **school lunches?**

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE



What is happening to your school lunches?

School lunches are changing for the better, and at no extra cost to you!

You can expect:

- Better quality food
- Healthier meals
- Bigger portion sizes
- Food labelling
- More and better choices
- Better dining room facilities

You will also have a say about what is served in your dining room, and how some of the improvements will be made.

Why should you have school meals anyway?

- It is important that you have something to eat at lunchtime
- Eating well and drinking enough water will help you to concentrate in class
- Lunch gives you an important part of your daily intake of nutrients, which play a vital part in how your body works and in keeping you healthy
- All the improvements planned for school lunches will make them tastier and more healthy



What parents should know

What role can you play?

You can encourage your children to choose school lunches. There are many benefits to eating them:

- Well-presented food at school can help children and young people learn more about food, nutrition and healthy lifestyles in a way that will shape their eating habits throughout their life
- Your children will benefit from an improved social experience at lunchtime. This is an important time for being with friends and classmates and school lunches will encourage this.

What other improvements are being made?

As well as improving dining room facilities and the content and presentation of school meals:

- Schools will ensure catering and dining staff are fully trained to help your children
- Your children will learn about food and health in the classroom and be encouraged to make healthier choices in the dining room.

How can you be sure the improvements will take place?

- The Scottish Executive has provided education authorities with funding specifically for improving school lunches
- The changes have the full backing of your school and its local authority
- Measures are being put in place at all levels to check the progress of the changes
- You will receive regular information about what is on the lunch menu
- Your school will welcome your involvement.



When will these changes take place?

- They will take time to happen right across Scotland, but will mean an improved school meals service which will provide a better and more enjoyable experience for your children
- All schools must start improving now and the process must be complete in primary and special schools by 2004, and in secondary schools by 2006.

What about free school meals?

- Access to free school meals is an important part of the school meals service in Scotland
- Young people who have free school meals will not be made to feel different from those who pay
- Young people who have free school meals will not be readily identified by others.

Who is eligible for free school meals?

You can claim free school meals for your children if you are receiving:

- Income support
- Income-based Job Seeker's Allowance
- Child Tax Credit, but not Working Tax Credit, and your income is less than the income threshold for child tax credit (as assessed by the Inland Revenue). This was £13,230 in 2003/04 and will be £13,480 for 2004/05, but may be updated every year.

