

EDUCATION BENEFITS – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What education benefits can I apply for?

This depends on where you live and what benefit(s) you are receiving. If you live in Hertfordshire and your child attends school in Hertfordshire you can apply for free school meals, help with music fees, cycle fees, TrainCard and/or SaverCard. See the table at the bottom of this page for further details.

I live in Hertfordshire but my child attends school in another county. What can I apply for?

For free school meals, you should apply to the local authority where your child's school is located. However, you can apply to Hertfordshire for help with music fees, cycle fees, TrainCard and SaverCard. See the table at the bottom of this page for further details.

I live in another county but my child attends a Hertfordshire school. What can I apply for?

You can apply for free school meals, but should contact the local authority where you live to apply for any other benefits it offers, which may be different to those available from Hertfordshire. See the table at the bottom of this page for further details.

How do I make an application for education benefits?

You can apply online at www.hertsdirect.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals. Applying is quick, easy and convenient and should take about ten minutes.

If your application includes free school meals, in most cases you will not need to supply paper proof of benefit. Once your application has been approved you will not need to do anything else. We will write to you to confirm which benefit(s) you qualify for, and we will also let your child's school know.

Alternatively, you can apply by calling our Customer Service Centre on 0300 123 4048 (8am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat).

If we do ask you to supply us with proof of benefit, we will tell you what to send us.

I am no longer receiving a qualifying benefit for free school meals and/or other education benefits. What do I need to do?

You must let us know by contacting our Customer Service Centre at howcanwehelp@hertscc.gov.uk or calling 0300 123 4048 (8am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat)

I will be moving to a different address, and/or my child will be attending a different school. What do I need to do?

You must let us know by contacting our Customer Service Centre at howcanwehelp@hertsc.gov.uk or calling 0300 123 4048 (8am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat).

If someone who wants to apply for education benefits does not have access to a computer, how can they apply online?

If they do not have access to the internet at home, access and support may be available at any of the following locations:

- Public libraries
- UK online centres (visit www.ukonlinecentres.com or call 0800 77 1234 to find your nearest centre)
- Your child's school

My child attends an Academy. Can I apply for any help?

Please contact your child's school to confirm arrangements for free school meals applications.

You can apply to Hertfordshire for help with the cost of a SaverCard or TrainCard, provided you are resident in Hertfordshire and in receipt of qualifying benefits. Help with the cost of Music fees is also available, provided the lessons are provided by Hertfordshire Music Service, the child attends full-time education at the Academy, and the parent/carer is both resident in Hertfordshire and in receipt of qualifying benefits.

My child attends nursery school. Can I apply?

Please contact your child's nursery school for more information.

My child attends an independent school. Can I apply for any help?

If your child attends an independent school, we will not be able to process your application. Please contact your child's school to find out what help and support the school can provide.

Do I need to renew my application for next September?

You will not need to renew your application as long as you remain eligible. We automatically check all applications for continuing eligibility at the end of each academic year, and will inform you if you need to reapply.

I have received a letter telling me that the County Council has checked its records and cannot see proof that I am still receiving any qualifying benefits and that therefore free school meals for my child/children will stop. Why is this?

Every half-term we check all free school meals applicants to make sure they are still eligible for free school meals. If you have received a letter stating that you are no longer eligible, this is likely to be because your circumstances and/or qualifying benefits have changed. If you think you are still eligible, you will need to reapply; please telephone the Customer Service Centre on 0300 123 4048 (8am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat).

I am hearing-impaired. How should I apply?

If you are hearing-impaired, we recommend you apply using the online form. However if you would like to speak to someone about your application, you can contact us via our minicom service on 0300 123 4041 (8am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat).

I require translation services. Do you offer these?

If you require translation services, please call the Customer Service Centre and ask the call advisor for Language Line.

Who do I contact if I still have questions?

If you have any further questions, please e mail us at howcanwehelp@hertscc.gov.uk or call our Customer Service Centre on 0300 123 4048 (8am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat). If you would like help completing the online form, please call the Customer Service Centre.

Help with the cost of education for the financial year 2011/12
For further information and to apply online, visit www.hertsdirect.org/freeschoolmeals

What can you apply for if you are receiving the following benefit(s)?	Free school meals	Assisted transport¹	Free SaverCard	Free TrainCard	Help with music fees	Help with cycle training
Income Support or Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (100%)	Yes (50%)
Income-related Employment and Support Allowance	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (100%)	Yes (50%)
Child Tax Credit, with a taxable income no more than £16,190 and not in receipt of Working Tax Credit	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (100%)	Yes (50%)
Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (100%)	Yes (50%)
Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (100%)	Yes (50%)
Child Tax Credit, payable at a rate higher than the family element, i.e. more than £545.34	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (50%)	Yes (50%)
Working Tax Credit, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit (not including second adult rebate)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (50%)	Yes (50%)
Working Tax Credit during the four-week period immediately after employment finishes or after you start to work less than 16 hours per week	Yes	No	No	No	No	No

¹ Limited places available. Please call 0300 123 4048 for further information.

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What can you apply to Hertfordshire County Council for?

	Free School Meals	Assisted Transport	SaverCard	TrainCard	Music Fees
1. If your child goes to a Hertfordshire school and you live within the county, apply to Hertfordshire County Council	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes²
2. If your child goes to a school outside of Hertfordshire but you live within the county, apply to Hertfordshire County Council	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes²
3. If your child goes to a Hertfordshire school but you live outside of Hertfordshire, apply to Hertfordshire County Council	Yes	No	No	No	No
4. If your child goes to a school outside of Hertfordshire and you also live outside of the county, apply to your home authority who you pay your Council Tax to	No	No	No	No	No

² Hertfordshire residents who receive free school meals can apply for help with music fees for lessons that take place in schools or at music centres that are operated by Hertfordshire Music Service.