



25th September 2025

Dear Students/Parents & Carers,

Purpose

The government provides funding for the provision of free meals for learners **who meet their eligibility criteria**. For the 25/26 academic year the rate set is a minimum of **£2.61** per learner per meal per day.

The Park College funds will provide a free meal to learners who attend a full day at college or in their work placement that is a part of their study.

Eligibility criteria for academic year 2025-2026

Free meals are targeted at disadvantaged learners.

Learners **must meet all** the following criteria (A, B and C) to qualify for Free Meals:

A. **AGE** – You must be over the age of 19 and have an Education, Health and Care Plan.

B. **FIANCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES** – You must be in receipt of, or have parents/carers 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 guaranteed 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 (paid for 4 weeks after someone stops qualifying for working Tax Credit) – please note Working Tax Credit alone is not a qualifying benefit
- Universal Credit with **net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400/year**





C. **RESIDENCY** – as set out in the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) regulations guidance 2025-26 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-funding-regulations-for-post-16-provision/advice-funding-rules-for-16-to-19-provision-2025-to-2026>

If you meet all these criteria, you are entitled to a Free Meal for each day you attend the course and will remain entitled until the end of the course.

If you are absent any of the days you will not receive a free college meal. Money already given must be kept and only spent on a day when you are in class or on a work placement.

Best wishes,

Catriona Guyler-Kone
Principal at The Park College

