

**TRINITY ACADEMY NEWCASTLE TRUST**

**Free School Meals Policy**

**Approved by the Committee – December 2023**

**On behalf of the Board**

**Next Review Date – December 2024**

## **Free school meals Policy**

The 1996 Education Act requires to provide free meals to disadvantaged students who are aged over 16 following FE courses at the range of FE funded institutions. Funding Agreements place a legal duty on institutions to comply with this requirement.

Institutions must make a free meal available for all eligible students for each day the student attends their study programme, where this is appropriate.

Institutions receive funding at a rate equivalent to £2.53 per student per meal.

Students aged over 19 who are continuing on the same study programme (19+ continuers) they started before they turned 19, or who have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are eligible for a free meal where they meet the criteria.

Transitional protections continue to apply. The protection means that all students already receiving free meals on or after 1 April 2018 continue to be eligible to receive free meals whilst Universal Credit continues to roll out. This also applies to students who were eligible for free schools meals (FSM) prior to moving into further education provision.

## **Student eligibility**

### **Age**

A student must be aged between 5 and 16 or under 19 on 31 August 2023 to be eligible to receive a free meal.

Students aged 19 or over are only eligible to receive a free meal if they are continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers') or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

These 2 groups of aged 19 plus students can receive a free meal while they continue to attend education (in the case of a 19+ continuer, this must be the same programme they started before they turned 19), as long as their eligibility continues.

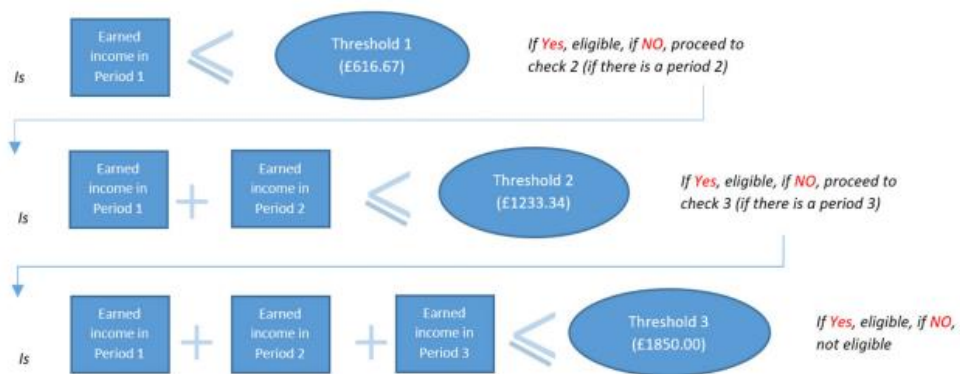
The following groups of students are not eligible for free meals in further education:

- students aged between 14 and 16 (these students are already covered by free school meals (FSM) provision)
- students aged 19 or over at the start of their study programme, unless they have an EHCP or are a 19+ continuer
- apprentices, including those with an EHCP

## **Eligible benefits**

Free meals are targeted at disadvantaged students. Free meals in further education defines disadvantage as 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 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
- Universal Credit (provided you have an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400, as assessed by earnings from up to three of your most recent assessment periods)



Further information can be found in the Bursary Policy.

**Signed on behalf of the Board:**

**Peter Carter (Chairperson of the Board)**  
**Date: December 2023**