

TRINITY ACADEMY NEWCASTLE TRUST

Post 16 Free School Meals Policy

Approved by the Committee – September 2026

On behalf of the Board

Next Review Date – August 2027

Free school meals Policy

The 1996 Education Act requires to provide free meals to disadvantaged students who are aged over 16. In the 2014 to 2015 academic year, the requirement was extended to disadvantaged students following further education (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 £2.61 per student per meal taken.

Students aged over 19 who are continuing on the same study programme (19+ continuers) that 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: students who were previously protected will no longer receive FSM if they no longer meet the new eligibility criteria.

Student eligibility

Age

A student must be aged between 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August 2026 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 Residency
- Students must also satisfy the residency criteria set out in: [Advice: funding rules for 16 to 19 provision 2026 to 2027 - GOV.UK](#)

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:

- Universal Credit
- support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

Households in receipt of Income-related Employment and Support Allowance or the guarantee element of Pension Credit may also be entitled to a meal.

Value and Payment of Free School Meals

Trinity Academy Newcastle Trust receives funding at a rate of £2.66 per student per eligible meal.

Eligible students will receive a direct payment of £2.66 per day into their bank account for each day they attend their study programme. Payments are made weekly in arrears (one week in hand).

Students are responsible for using this allowance to purchase their own meals during the college day. The payment is made to support students in purchasing food and drink, and students should budget accordingly to ensure the allowance covers their daily meal requirements.

To receive free school meal payments, students must:

- Complete a Bursary Application form providing their bank account details
- Notify the Academy immediately if their bank details change

Payments will be calculated based on actual attendance. Students will not receive payments for days they are absent from their study programme.

Payment Schedule and Process

Free school meal payments are processed weekly on a Friday for the previous week's attendance. For example, attendance from Monday 8th September to Friday 12th September will be paid on Friday 19th September.

The first payment may take up to 4 weeks to process while bank details are verified and attendance records are confirmed.

Non-Attendance

Students will only receive payment for days they attend the academy. If a student is absent, the payment for that day will not be included in their weekly payment. This includes both authorised and unauthorised absences.

Bank Account Requirements

Students must provide:

A UK bank account in their own name
Valid sort code and account number

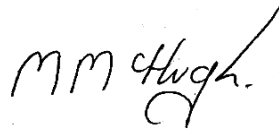
We cannot make payments to:

- Cash
- Pre-paid cards
- Third-party accounts

This is linked to:

Bursary Policy

Signed on behalf of the Board:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MM Hugh', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Michael McHugh (Chairperson of the Board)

Date: July 2026