



If you are on a low income and have children at school you may be entitled to financial support.

This booklet covers some of the financial supports available and how to apply for them.

SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES



PRIMARY SCHOOL

BEST START GRANT

WHAT

The Best Start Grant School Age Payment is £252.50 for each child to help with the costs of children starting school. It is up to you what you spend it on and you don't need to show receipts.

WHEN

When you need to apply for the School Age Payment depends on when your child was born:

Your Childs Date of Birth	When you can apply
Between 1 March 2016 and 28February 2017	Between 1 June 2021 and 28 February 2022
Between 1 March 2017 and 28 February 2018	Between 1 June 2022 and 28 February 2023

Apply online at <https://www.mygov.scot/best-start-grant-best-start-foods/how-to-apply> or call **0800 182 2222** to apply on the phone or to request a form.

WHO

You can claim this payment if you are responsible for a school age child and you or your partner are entitled to:

- Universal Credit
- Child Tax Credit or Working Tax Credit
- Income Support
- Income-Based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income-Related Employment and Support Allowance
- Housing Benefit
- Pension Credit

If you have recently become responsible for a child, for instance as a kinship carer you might qualify for a payment even if a payment has already been made to someone else as long as you were not that person's partner when they received the grant and the child is not living with that person.

SCOTTISH CHILD PAYMENT

WHAT

The Scottish Child Payment helps towards the costs of supporting your family. It's a weekly payment of £10 (this is to be increased to £20 from April) that you can get for every child you look after who's under 6 years of age. You'll get the payment every 4 weeks if your application is successful.

WHEN

All children under the age of 6 years old are eligible for the payment. You should apply as soon as you become eligible as payments may not be backdated

WHO

You can claim this payment if you are responsible for a child under 6 and you or your partner receive:

- Universal Credit
- Child Tax Credit or Working Tax Credit
- Income Support
- Income-Based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income-Related Employment and Support Allowance
- Pension Credit

Apply online at <https://www.mygov.scot/scottish-child-payment/how-to-apply>

FREE SCHOOL MEALS

WHAT

All school children in Primary 1 to 5 are entitled to a Universal free school meal, however to ensure you are eligible to receive payments for additional support ie meal payments during school holidays, you must make an application for Free School Meals.

WHEN

All school children in Primary 1 to 5 are entitled to a free school meal but please make an application to ensure you receive any additional benefits. Applications normally open in June for the next academic year.

From Primary 6 you must apply for FreeSchool Meals.

WHO

You can claim if you are in receipt of any one of the following:

- Income Support / Pension Credit
- Income-Based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income-Related Employment and Support Allowance
- Both Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit with a household income of up to £7,500
- Child Tax Credit only with an annual income of less than £16,105
- Universal Credit with a monthly earned income of not more than £625
- Support under Part VI of the immigration and asylum act 1999

Apply online at <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/helpwithcosts>

SCHOOL CLOTHING GRANT

WHAT

The School Clothing Grant is an annual payment of £150 towards the cost of essential school clothing.

WHEN

From when your child starts school or if your circumstances change to any of the qualifying criteria.

WHO

You can claim if you are in receipt of any one of the following:

- Council Tax Reduction
- Income Support / Pension Credit
- Income-Based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income-Related Employment and Support Allowance
- Working Tax Credit and/or Child Tax Credit with an annual income of less than £16,105
- Universal Credit where your monthly earned income is not more than £1,342
- Support under Part VI of the immigration and asylum act 1999

Apply online at <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/helpwithcosts>

SECONDARY SCHOOL

FREE SCHOOL MEALS

WHAT

The current award of a secondary free school meal is £2.20 per day. This is credited daily to your child's school lunch account.

WHEN

From S1 onward you must apply for Free School Meals. Applications normally open in June for the next academic year.

WHO

You can claim if you are in receipt of any one of the following:

- Income Support / Pension Credit
- Income-Based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income-Related Employment and Support Allowance
- Both Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit with a household income of up to £7,500
- Child Tax Credit only with an annual income of less than £16,105
- Universal Credit with a monthly earned income of not more than £625
- Support under Part VI of the immigration and asylum act 1999

Apply online at <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/helpwithcosts>

SCHOOL CLOTHING GRANT

WHAT

The School Clothing Grant is an annual payment of £180 towards the cost of essential school clothing.

WHEN

From when your child starts school and up to school leaving age. Students staying at school over the school leaving age will not be eligible for a clothing grant however they may apply for EMA payments.

WHO

You can claim if you are in receipt of any one of the following:

- Council Tax Reduction
- Income Support / Pension Credit
- Income-Based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income-Related Employment and Support Allowance
- Both Working Tax Credit and / or Child Tax Credit with an annual income of less than £16,105
- Universal Credit where your monthly earned income is not more than £1,342
- Support under Part VI of the immigration and asylum act 1999

Apply online at <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/helpwithcosts>

STAYING ON AT SCHOOL

FREE SCHOOL MEALS

WHAT

The current award of a secondary free school meal is £2.20 per day. This is credited daily to your child's school lunch account.

WHEN

From S1 onward you must apply for Free School Meals. Applications normally open in June for the next academic year.

WHO

You can claim if you are in receipt of any one of the following:

- Income Support / Pension Credit
- Income-Based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income-Related Employment and Support Allowance
- Both Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit with a household income of up to £7,500
- Child Tax Credit only with an annual income of less than £16,105
- Universal Credit with a monthly earned income of not more than £625
- Support under Part VI of the immigration and asylum act 1999

Apply online at <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/helpwithcosts>

EDUCATION MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE

WHAT

EMA is an allowance of £30 per week for young people aged between 16 -19 years old who stay on at school and their household income meets the criteria. Students on Activity Agreements (HYPE agreements), are Home Educated, attend Donaldsons or Moorehouse or estranged from parents or in care of the authority can also be paid.

WHEN

An EMA provides financial support for 16-19 year olds who stay on at school. You should apply as soon as you become eligible as payments may not be backdated.

WHO

A young person aged 16-19 who attends a West Lothian School for a minimum of 21 hours per week and their household income falls into the categories below.

The young person qualifies if your annual household income is:

Household Income	No of dependent Children in Household
£0 - £24,421	1
£0 - £26,884	2+

Apply online at <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/ema-application>

YOUNG CARER GRANT

WHAT

The Young Carer Grant is a yearly payment of £308.15 for young carers in Scotland. How the grant is spent is up to you, there is no need to provide receipts.

WHEN

To be able to get a Young Carer Grant you must:

- Be 16, 17 or 18 years old
- Have been caring for 1,2 or 3 people for an average of 16 hours per week for at least the last 3 months

If you care for more than one person, you can combine the hours of the people you care for to average 16 hours per week.

Apply online at <https://www.mygov.scot/young-carer-grant> or call **0800 182 2222** to apply by phone or request a form.

WHO

You can get a Young Carer Grant if all of these apply

- You're 16, 17 or 18 years old
- You've been caring for one or more people for around 16 hours per week for the last 3 months
- The person or people you care for get certain benefits
- You're not being paid to care for someone as part of your job
- You're not helping care for the person you apply for as a volunteer, for example as part of a care group or charity
- You're not already getting Carer's Allowance from the Department for Work and Pensions

CHILD BENEFIT/CHILD ALLOWANCES

WHAT

If the young person stays on at school you may still be able to receive **Child Benefit** and a **Child Element top-up** to either your **Child Tax Credit** or **Universal Credit** even if they have reached the age of 16.

This can be as much as **£21.15** per week for Child Benefit and **£64.90 per week** for Child Tax Credit or Universal Credit

WHEN

These entitlements can continue from when the young person turns 16 until the September following their 19th birthday providing the course they are doing is non-advanced (Studying Highers or less) and it is considered to be a full time course (at least 12 hours per week)






















WHO

Child Benefit and the Child element top-up to either Child Tax Credit or Universal Credit normally stops on the 31 August following your young person's 16th birthday.

Providing you continue to meet the qualifying conditions for Child Benefit, Child Tax Credits or Universal Credit and your young person is on a course of non-advanced study (Studying Highers or less) and it is considered to be a full time course (at least 12 hours per week)

You must tell Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) for Child Benefit and Child Tax Credit or your work coach at the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for Universal Credit.

	BEST START GRANT	FREE SCHOOL MEALS	SCHOOL CLOTHING GRANT	EMA
What you get...	£252.50 payment	Set Meal Primary £2.20 Secondary	£150 Primary £180 Secondary	£30 per week
When you can get it...				
Primary School	!	!	!	
Secondary School		!	!	
Staying On		!		!
Qualifying Criteria...				
Income Support	!	! ! !	! !	
Income Based Job Seekers Allowance	!	! ! !	! !	
Income Related Employment Support Allowance	!	! ! !	! !	
Housing Benefit	!			
Council Tax Reduction			! !	
Pension Credit	!	! ! !	! !	
Child Tax Credit or Working Tax Credit	!			
Both Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit with an annual income of up to £7,500		! ! !		

Child Tax Credit only with an annual income of less than £16,105		  	 	
Universal Credit				
Universal Credit with a monthly earned income not more than £625		  	 	
Universal Credit with a monthly earned income not more than £1342			 	
Support under Part VI of the immigration and asylum act 1999		  	 	
A young person aged 16-19 who attends a West Lothian School for a minimum of 21 guided learning hours per week.				
The young person qualifies if your household income is £24,421 or less (£26,884 if you have another child under 16 or under 25 in education.)				
The young person is willing to participate in and approved learning agreement at school.				
How to get it...				
	Apply online, download a claim form or call 0800 182 2222 to apply on the phone or request a form.	Apply online on West Lothian Councils website in the Help with School Costs section.	Apply online on West Lothian Councils website in the Help with School Costs section.	Apply online on West Lothian Councils website in the Help with School Costs section.

WHO CAN HELP?



ComputerHope.com

Many families don't get all the financial assistance and benefits they are entitled to. This may be because they are unaware of their entitlement, the rules are complex or because they have been wrongly refused.

If you are on a low income you may be able to get some help even if you haven't claimed before or if you think you won't qualify.

If a member of your family has a disability or long term health condition, or is an unpaid carer for someone, you may be able to get some extra help – for example parents of disabled children can get disability benefits without taking into account their income.

If you have a low income or are affected by or have a child or young person affected by disability or ill health or feel you would like some additional information regarding your financial situation it may be worth speaking to your Family and Young People's Advice Worker.

Family and Young People's Advice Workers

Deans Community High School - Jennie

Inveralmond Community High School – Jacqui

St Kentigern's Academy – Jennie

St Margaret's Academy – Caroline

The James Young High School – Caroline

West Calder High School - Nicola

Whitburn Academy – Jacqui

Email: FYPAS@westlothian.gov.uk

Call :01506 283 000 opt 4

Or speak to your school and ask for them to pass your contact details onto your FYPAS worker.



NOTES

Useful websites

Benefit calculator - <https://westlothian.entitledto.co.uk/home/start>

Food map - <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/48304/Access-to-Food>

Scottish Welfare Fund - <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/scottish-welfare-fund>

Budgeting tool - <https://budgetnew.entitledto.co.uk/westlothian>

Scottish Benefits - <https://www.mygov.scot/browse/benefits>

NOT SURE ...

...JUST ASK



For details on how to receive **Free Advice** on anything you have read in this booklet please see contact details above.