

Get help towards the cost of school clothing

West Lothian pupils living in a low income household could be entitled to extra help with the costs of uniforms, lunches and staying on at school.

Parents can apply for a payment of up to £110 to help towards the cost of a school uniform, through **West Lothian Council's School Clothing Grant scheme**.

A payment of £94 could be provided to help parents/carers with the costs of school uniforms for P1 to P7 primary school pupils and £110 for secondary school pupils from S1 to S4, and some S5 pupils depending on their date of birth.

To qualify for a school clothing grant, parents/carers must be in receipt of a qualifying benefit such as Income Support, Income Related Employment Support Allowance or Income Based Jobseekers Allowance, or be in receipt of Working or Child Tax Credits, providing the household's annual income is £16,105 or less.

Free school meals are also available for children and young people whose family is in receipt of Child Tax Credit (with no Working Tax payments) - taxable income must not exceed £16,105. Or, in receipt of both Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit - taxable income must not exceed £6,420.

West Lothian Council provides a free breakfast to all pupils in primary schools who want it. Breakfast is also free to those entitled to free school meals in secondary schools. Please contact your child's school direct for further details of the breakfast club times. In Secondary Schools pupils entitled to free school meals will have a breakfast provision allowance included on their National Entitlement Card (NEC)/Young Scot Card. All other secondary pupils can purchase the same breakfast for 55p.

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) of £30 per week is also available to help students to stay on at school, and is payable depending on the household income which is assessed in the same way as for Tax Credits provided by HM Revenue & Customs. Students estranged from parents or in care of West Lothian Council can also be paid.

If the applying student is the only dependent child in the household - taxable income must not exceed £24,421, or if there is more than one dependent child in the household - taxable income must not exceed £26,884.

Applications are being accepted now. A student must be born between 1 March 1997 and 28 February 2001 to be eligible for Education Maintenance Allowance from West Lothian Council.

- Students born between 1 March 1997 and 30 September 2000 can start payment from week beginning 22 August 2016. The application form must arrive at West Lothian Civic Centre by Friday 30 September 2016, for payments this academic term.
- Students who are born between 1 October 2000 and 28 February 2001 may start payments from Wednesday 4 January 2017. The application form must arrive at the Civic Centre by Tuesday 28 February 2017.

Application forms which do not arrive by the deadlines can only be paid from the week in which the application is received. The closing date for application forms is 31 March 2017. No application will be accepted after this date.

If the applying student is the only dependent child in the household - taxable income must not exceed £24,421, or if there is more than one dependent child in the household - taxable income must not exceed £26,884.

Executive councillor for education, Lawrence Fitzpatrick commented: "West Lothian Council is committed to promoting equality for people in West Lothian and improving the quality of life for local people. Providing clothing grants, free school meals and Education Maintenance Allowance is one of the ways in which we support families with low income or receiving certain benefits. We would encourage who has children at school to find out whether they are eligible to apply for support."

Anyone who thinks that they may qualify for a School Clothing Grant can contact West Lothian Advice Shop on 01506 283000 (and select option 4) for further information and details on how to apply.

Alternatively contact your child's school for information or e-mail:
educationcustomerservices@westlothian.gov.uk