

EDUCATION (SCHOOL MEALS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2003

EXPLANATORY NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. These Explanatory Notes have been prepared by the Scottish Administration in order to assist the reader of the Act. They do not form part of the Act and have not been endorsed by the Parliament.
2. The Notes should be read in conjunction with the Act. They are not, and are not meant to be, a comprehensive description of the Act. So where a section or schedule, or a part of a section or schedule, does not seem to require any explanation or comment, none is given.

THE ACT

3. The Act amends section 53(3) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 to take account of a change to the benefits and tax systems made by the Tax Credits Act 2002 and to allow account to be taken of similar changes in the future.
4. Section 53(1)(a) of the 1980 Act confers a power on education authorities to provide milk, meals or other refreshments to school pupils. Where an education authority exercises this power, subsection (2) requires them to charge for anything so provided, and to charge the same price for the same quantity to each pupil. Subsection (3AA), in conjunction with subsection (3), places a duty on education authorities to exercise their power under subsection (1) so as to make provision in the middle of the day, free of charge, to pupils:
 - who are in receipt of income support or income-based jobseeker's allowance;
or
 - whose parents are in receipt of those benefits or are in receipt of support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
5. The Tax Credits Act 2002 creates, among other things, a new tax credit (child tax credit (CTC)) which replaces the child-related elements of income support and income-related jobseeker's allowance. Parents can claim CTC with effect from 6 April 2003. Tax year 2003-04 is a transitional year. From 6 April 2004, the child-related element of the two benefits will be removed and parents will be obliged to claim CTC if they wish to continue to receive income-based financial support for their children. Income support and income based jobseeker's allowance will remain as social security benefits but will be adult-related only.

Section 1 - Duty to provide free school meals

6. Section 1 of the Act amends section 53(3) of the 1980 Act. Subsections (2) and (3) insert into paragraphs (a) and (b) of section 53(3) powers to allow Scottish Ministers to prescribe other benefits or allowances and tax credits (or elements of tax credits) receipt of

*These notes refer to the Education (School Meals) (Scotland) Act 2003 (asp 18)
which received Royal Assent on 7 July 2003*

which (in circumstances prescribed) by pupils or their parents obliges education authorities to provide free school meals.

7. Subsection (4) provides that the first regulations made under these new powers shall have retrospective effect from 6 April 2003. Subsequent regulations made in exercise of the powers will not have such retrospective effect.

PARLIAMENTARY HISTORY OF THE BILL FOR THIS ACT

8. The following table sets out, for each stage of the proceedings in the Scottish Parliament on the Bill for this Act, the dates on which proceedings at that stage took place and the references to the Official Report of those proceedings.

Proceedings and Reports	Reference
Introduction 29 May 2003	SP Bill 3 Session 2 2003 Cols 292 - 293
Stage 1 <i>Consideration by Parliament</i> 4 June 2003	Cols 325 - 387
Stage 2 <i>Consideration by Parliament</i> 11 June 2003	Cols 570 - 613
Stage 3 <i>Consideration by Parliament</i> 11 June 2003	Cols 614 - 623
Royal Assent 7 July 2003	

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