



Please contact us if you or your parent/carers need help completing the form.

The Application - what will I need?

- A pen! We can't accept applications completed in pencil. Please use dark ink and if you make a mistake, clearly initial the changes. Please also ensure you have the correct year's application form; these change annually and a previous year's form can't be used.
- **Please keep your school record up to date.** Some information on the EMA system is now fed from your school record. If you've moved address or perhaps live with a different parent/carer, please ensure your school has been informed. Your application may be delayed if the address or other information differs from that held by your school.

The documents we need depend on the information given in your application, however there are a few things which must be provided with *every* application:

- **Your original birth certificate or passport.**
- **A 2010 or '11 Child Benefit Award letter.** This must show your name and confirmation of continued payment. We need this to prove guardianship and check that the EMA has been assessed on the household in which you live. This may also be used to prove any other dependant children. If your parent/carer doesn't have the original, they can get a copy of this letter by calling the Child Benefits Office on 0845 302 1444. It's better to do this as early as possible as the feedback we have received is that this number is often engaged for long periods of time, especially during August and September. Please note that the review letter, normally sent as you approach your 16th birthday, can't be used.

If you live on your own or with someone other the person who has received Child Benefit payments, full details must be provided in the additional information sheet of the application form. Your application may be delayed until guardianship is clarified.

- **Proof of household income.** As each EMA is assessed on the money received in your household, we need to prove the total. Your parent/carer should have this information. This section of the application form is set out by HMRC and can be very detailed depending on your circumstances. Don't panic! Ideally you should submit a full Tax Credit Award Notice (TCAN TC602). We need the actual, *not estimated* income for 2009-10 detailed on the inside pages of the TCAN. We don't use any working or family tax credit amounts paid to your parent/carers. Information detailed on a TCAN can vary and we may still have to request further evidence. We can also accept a P60 or Week52/Month 12 pay slip (normally issued March/April '10).

If your parent/carer is in receipt of benefits, you must provide proof of all amounts received during 2009-10. The DWP normally provide details of your weekly rates at the start of each tax year and may also issue a P60u at the year end for any taxable benefits. If these are unavailable, the DWP must complete part C of the application form (cert. of benefits rec'd). Please tear off and send *only* this part to the DWP. Falkirk DWP may not be able to complete this; please contact them first if unsure. Please keep the rest of the application until this is returned to you unless you are approaching a submission deadline.

For parents/carers who are self employed, we must see evidence of income, preferably as *actual* income on a TCAN. If this is unavailable, a self assessment tax calculation (SA302) is acceptable. If

the tax assessment is done online by an accountant, we can now accept the Inland Revenue online confirmation sent to the accountant, providing a copy of the submission is also sent so the reference number, amounts and name can be checked. We can also accept a copy of the full accounts for the year ended April '10. Should none of these be available *and* you are applying before January '11, the Accountant's Certificate on part B should be completed. This can only be accepted on a temporary basis until actual confirmation is provided. This may mean your application is delayed or dealt with on a provisional basis only.

Guidance on proof required for other types of income is detailed in the application. If you need further help please give us a call.

What else? We may have to ask for other information depending on your application and if this is the case, we will write to you. For example, if you live in a Lone Parent Household and this can't be proved by a Council Tax Notice, we will need additional information to explain why. Households with more than one child up to the age of 16, or older if in fulltime education will also need to provide proof. Your application form will also be returned to you at this time and information or corrections which need to be made will be highlighted for your attention. Please check this and return along with any documents requested before the deadline detailed in our letter.

Some documents we ask for are important originals which you may not wish to post by regular mail. You can use recorded delivery, however we will only be able to return these by the same if your addressed envelope is correctly prepaid and marked with the recorded delivery sticker. **Falkirk Council accepts no liability for items lost or delayed in the post.** If you are posting the application please check the postage is correct; a first class stamp will not be enough. Insufficient postage incurs a penalty fee from Royal Mail and considerably delays delivery which can result in a loss of payment. You may prefer to take the application to a One Stop Shop where a member of Customer First staff can copy your documents while you wait. Please ask the member of staff to certify (stamp and/or sign) the copies to acknowledge the originals have been seen. Please note that Customer First staff are unable to answer specific EMA queries or approve supporting evidence and that not all One Stop Shops have a Customer First Advisor available every day.

EMA Team, with Education Services Headquarters, is moving premises in the summer of 2010 and for this reason we must request that you **do not visit the office in person during the months of July and August.**

Double check! Please be careful when providing your bank details. If you provide incorrect information, it can take up to 6 weeks to trace and may result in a loss of payment. Please only provide a 6 digit sort code and a personal 8 digit account number; our system is unable to make payment to any account requiring a roll or reference number. If in doubt, please check with your Bank.

Remember, your application must be in our hands within the first 6 weeks of term to allow authorised payments from the start of term. If you are nearing a deadline please submit the application with as much information as possible, even if incomplete. Applications may be returned for clarification/other information, but missed payments may be backdated on authorisation from your school. When your application is approved, you'll receive a letter of award and the learning agreement which must be signed and taken to school. We will also send you a pupil handbook which has useful information about the types of award, learning agreements, absence procedures etc and a note of payment dates.

If you are a home educated student, please contact us for further guidance.

If you get stuck, don't worry! Check the guidance notes next to each section of the application form, the EMA page of the Falkirk Council website or contact us.