

All large families in London

SCHOOL MEALS

School children in the 30 families getting free school meals

	<u>Secondary</u>		<u>Primary</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	<u>No</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>%</u>
Stay at school free	43	10.6	69	17.4	112	28
Come home or pay at school	10 3	3.4	13 1	3.3	27	6.7
	56	14	83	20.7	139	34.7

14 of these families were receiving N.A. or N.I. benefits at the time of interviewing

4 are paying - one pays full price because he hates being marked as a child getting free dinners.

one pays 3d a meal

one pays 6d a meal

one pays 1/3d a meal plus breakfast, he goes to an open air school

Of the 23 children who could have free meals and don't stay, 14 won't stay because they don't like the food, and be made to eat it. This may be because they have such an unvaried diet at home, they can't get used to the different foods at school, and being forced to eat this strange food puts them off. Their mothers rarely persevere in getting them to like certain foods at home, because they can't afford to waste any food. The reasons for those not staying from families who could afford to pay, was that there was not enough to eat, or their mothers thought them too young to stay.

School children in 55 families who pay for school dinners.

	<u>Secondary</u>		<u>Primary</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	<u>No</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>%</u>
No who stay at school	83	20.7	117	29.3	200	50
Come home or take a packed lunch	20	5	35	10.3	55	15.3
Total	103	25.7	152	39.6	255	65.3

3 pay less than full price - 2 go to special schools.

Of these 55 families, 3 would appear to have an income low enough to qualify for free meals. These families contain 6 children of primary school age and 11 of secondary school age.

- One family does not get free meals because the eldest children felt so uncomfortable getting free meals they asked their mothers to always try and pay. As her eldest daughter put it "If you get free meals you're marked for life" The family consists of 6 children of school age, 4 who have left. Their father is a builders' labourer and during the winter is often out of work.

Their mother works as a cleaner. "The School Board Officer" i.e. a school care committee worker told the mother it would be worth applying for a uniform grant, however the father was too proud to apply.

2. Another family of six children goes without free meals although they applied for them. The father is a shoe repairer earning £14 (net) weekly. The two oldest boys are at grammar school - they got a uniform grant of £8 for the first but not for the second. On enquiring the father was told he was a borderline case and could appeal against their decision, but it wouldn't be worth his trouble. He thought this strange because his income had remained the same, however he didn't appeal and luckily won £21 on the football pools in time to buy the uniform.
3. The third family have eight children, all under 15. The father is epileptic but manages to work as a builder's labourer, keeping his epilepsy a secret from his employer. However he misses a lot of time because of this illness and very rarely does much overtime, his pay averages just under £12 weekly. His wife works as a milk bottle sorter earning £7/14/- net, however she had an accident 6 years ago and damaged the nerves in her hand and so has to spend periods in hospital for treatment. She applied for free meals when she was losing time having treatment and was refused. The oldest daughter goes to a special school as she has St Vitus' Dance - she only pays 2/6d a week for school meals.

Husbands net earnings	£ 11/16/-
Wives "	£ 7/14/4
Family Allowances	£ <u>2/18/-</u>
	£ 22/ 8/4
Allowable expenses	
Rent	£ 4/ 1/-
Travelling expenses	£ 4/-
40/- of wife's earnings	£ 2/ -/-
Net weekly income	£ 16/ 3/4

With 7 dependent children a family should get free meals for all the children if net weekly income is less than 350/6 and for one if less than 380/6.

With 323/4 this family should get free meals for all the children, instead one child pays half price, the rest pay in full.

Altogether

~~Altogether~~ 44 children would seem to be entitled to free meals but for various reasons don't get them - this is about 11% of school children in the sample.