

How to use the Citrus Special Diets Portal



Welcome

Welcome to your school 'How to guide' designed to support you through the steps you will need to take to access your online account for the new HCL Special Diet registration portal.

This guide explains how to use your school dashboard where you'll have a single place to view all those children requiring a special diet meal within your school. Along with this, it will guide you through the quick and simple actions on how to approve an application by confirming a child is registered on roll at your school, to the end of the process when you print off the menu and poster to hand to the kitchen ready for the child to start to eat a school lunch.

All data will be held securely whilst appropriate details will be visible to all parties. If any changes are made, automatic notifications will be sent to the parent to confirm the changes, to you as the school and to us as your school lunch provider.



How does applying for a special diet work?

The Citrus Special Menu portal is designed to make applying for a special diet quick and easy for parents and the management of special diets at your school simple.

The system is entirely electronic and there are several key steps that an application goes through for the child to be served. The process is described on the following page.

For ease we have highlighted the steps that your school will be involved with in green for quick reference.



**Step 1:**

Parent makes an application for a special diet.

**Step 2:**

HCL food development team reviews the application and passes it to the school to confirm the child is on roll.

**Step 3:**

The school receives the application and confirms that the child is on its roll and can be fed.

**Step 4:**

The parent receives confirmation of the menu that is going to be fed to the child and approves it.

**Step 5:**

HCL Contract Manager approves that application and confirms the date that the child can be fed the special diet.

**Step 6:**

The school receives confirmation that the child will be fed from the approved date and are requested to access the approved application and print the poster and the menu so that you can pass this to the kitchen.

**Step 7:**

Kitchen serve child the approved Special Menu.

**Confirmation**

The school has the option of approving or rejecting an application if the child does not attend the school.



Accessing the portal for the first time

The portal is set up so that your access to new applications and approved menus is through a dedicated account page.

You will have received an email from the HCL Food Development Team that will have your account username and password that will enable you to access the portal.

The first time you log in we require you to change your password. Please follow the steps outlined in the following pages.

If you have had access to the Special Menu portal before your username and password will be the same.



Step 1

Please go to the following website:
<https://specialdiet.citrus.online/>

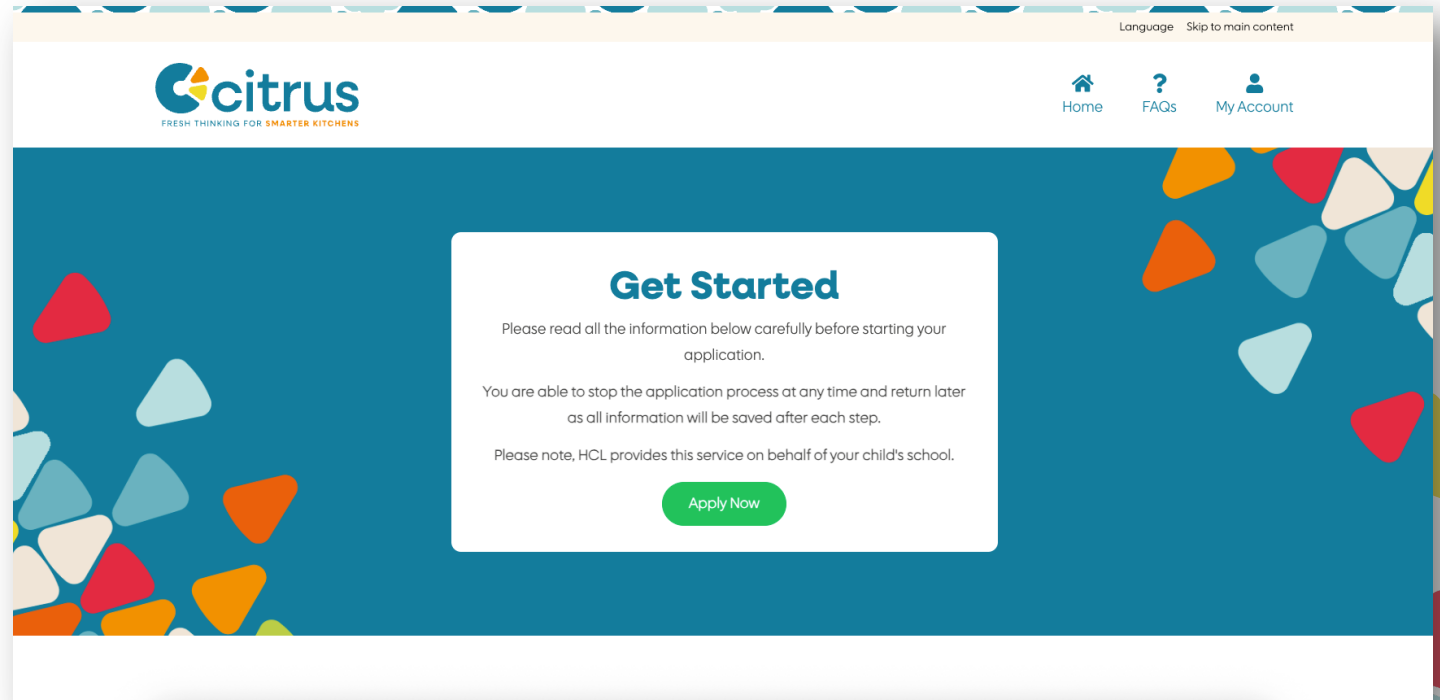
Please note – do not enter www at the start of the web address.

Step 2

Click the “My account symbol” in top right-hand corner.
This will take you to the login page.

Step 3

Enter the username and password that you have been sent.
Then click “sign in”



Step 4

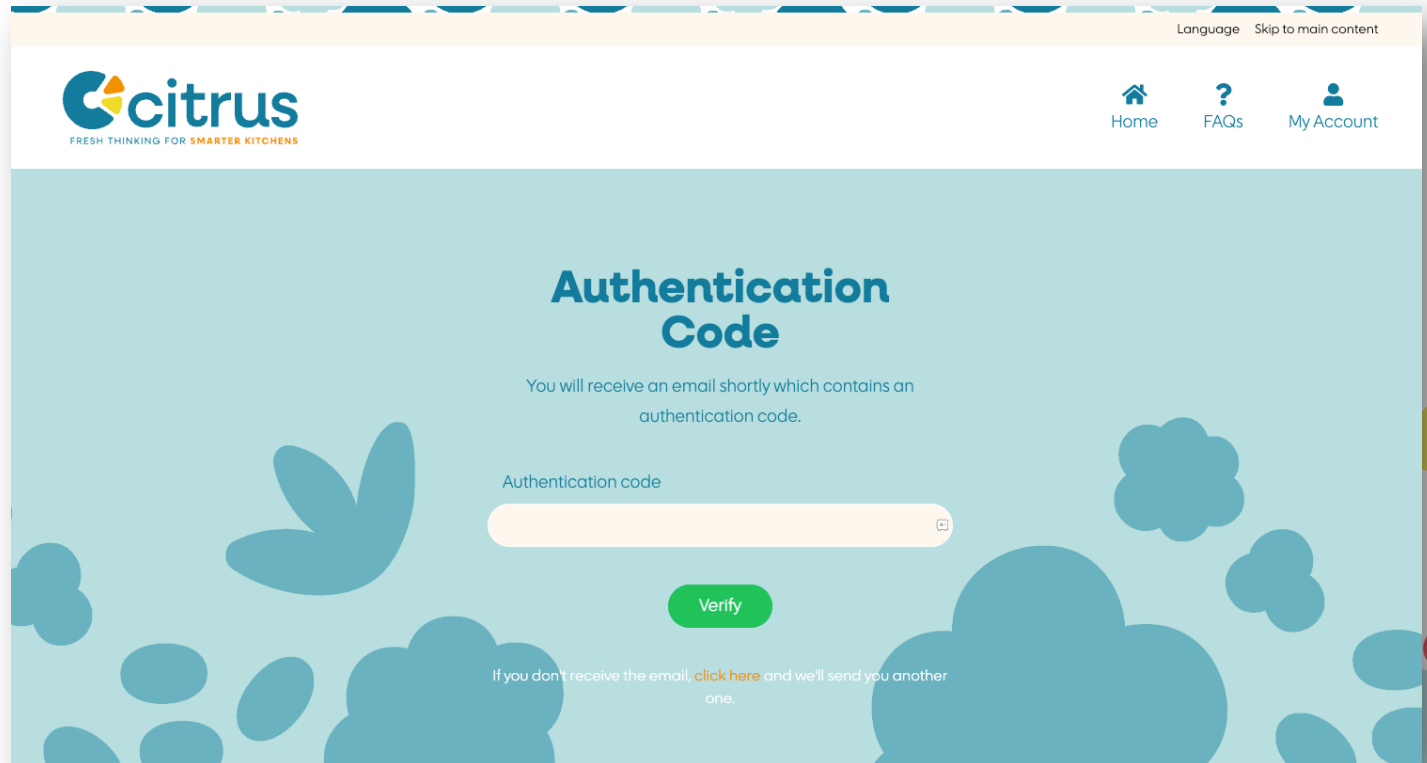
Once logged in please check your email account for a verification code.

Step 5

Enter the verification code into the box and click verify.

Step 6

Reset your password if you have been prompted to do so.



The screenshot shows the Citrus website's 'Authentication Code' page. The header features the Citrus logo with the tagline 'FRESH THINKING FOR SMARTER KITCHENS' and navigation links for Home, FAQs, and My Account. The main content area has a light blue background with stylized cloud and leaf illustrations. It displays the title 'Authentication Code' and a message: 'You will receive an email shortly which contains an authentication code.' Below this is a text input field labeled 'Authentication code' and a green 'Verify' button. At the bottom, there is a link: 'If you don't receive the email, [click here](#) and we'll send you another one.'

Language Skip to main content

citrus
FRESH THINKING FOR SMARTER KITCHENS

Home ? My Account

Authentication Code

You will receive an email shortly which contains an authentication code.

Authentication code

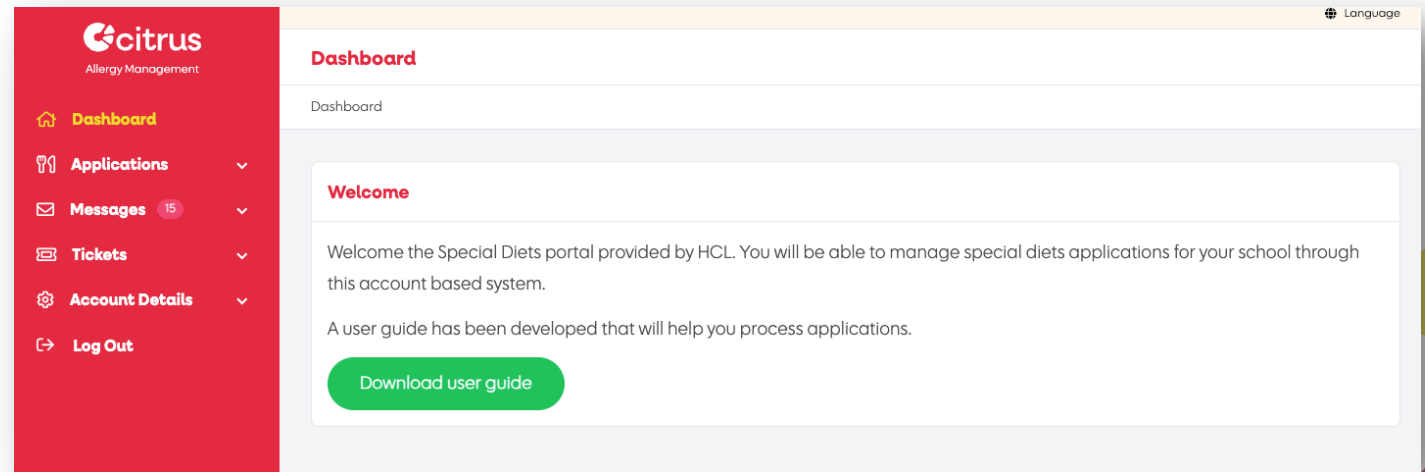
Verify

If you don't receive the email, [click here](#) and we'll send you another one.

Key features of the Dashboard

Once you have logged in and changed your password you will be able to access the main dashboard of the portal. The menu features three key areas that you will use to manage applications and special diets. These are:

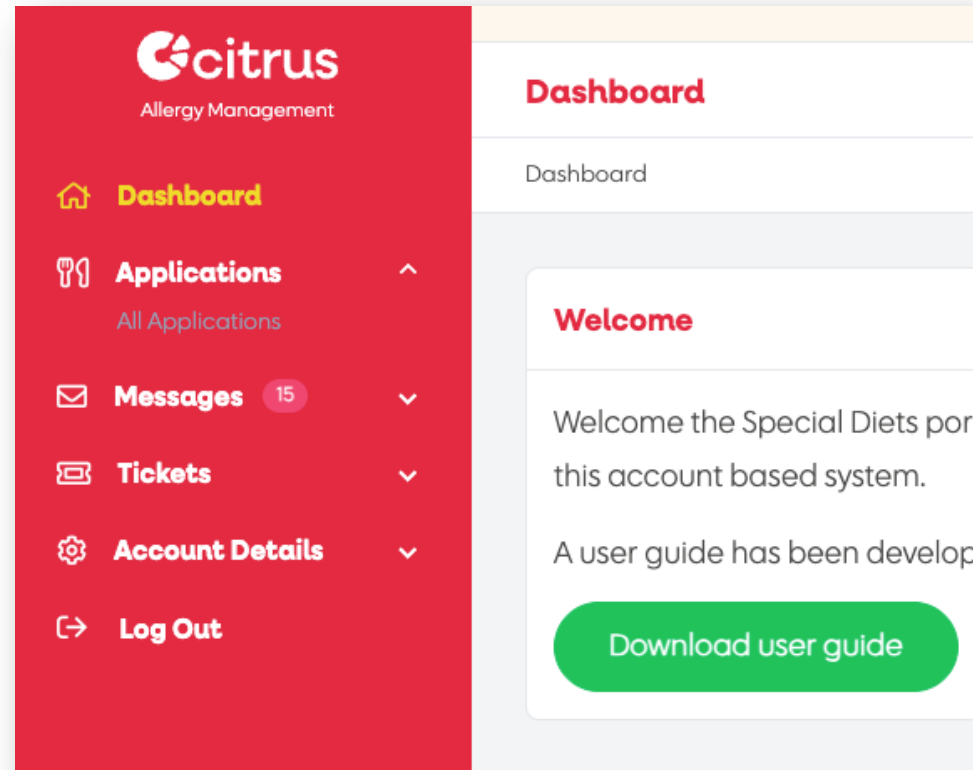
1. The home screen.
2. My messages – where you will receive notifications and messages from HCL.
3. An applications screen, showing pending applications for your attention.
4. Tickets section
5. Account Details to manage your account



Accessing an Application

When our Nutritionist team receive an application from a parent at your school, we will review the medical evidence and if appropriate we will pass this to you to confirm the child is on your roll.

We have designed this process to be as easy as possible for you. When an application is sent to you you will receive an email telling you that you need to log into the portal.



Accessing an Application

Step 1

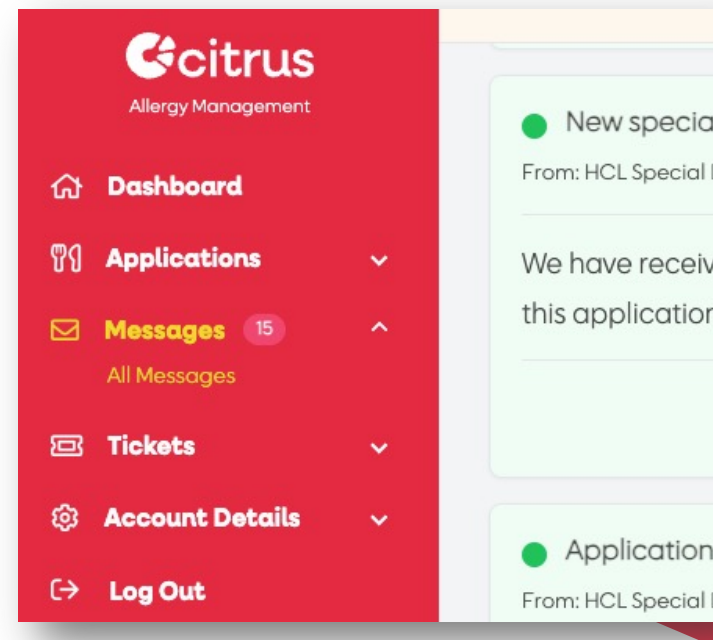
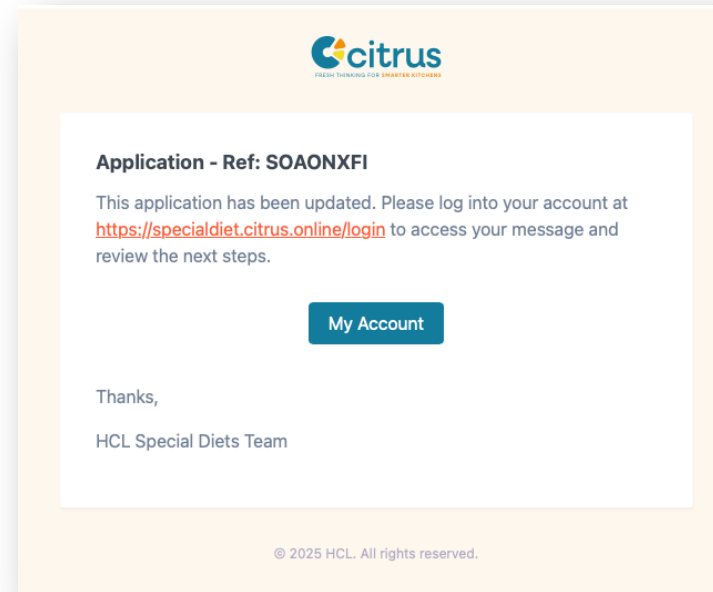
You will receive an email letting you know that an application has been passed to your school along with a prompt to log into the portal.

Step 2

Once logged in you will see a notification that you have new messages.

Step

Click messages and read the message that has been sent to you. If we need to ask a specific question about the application or send you a message, then this will be displayed in the message.



Accessing an Application

Step 1

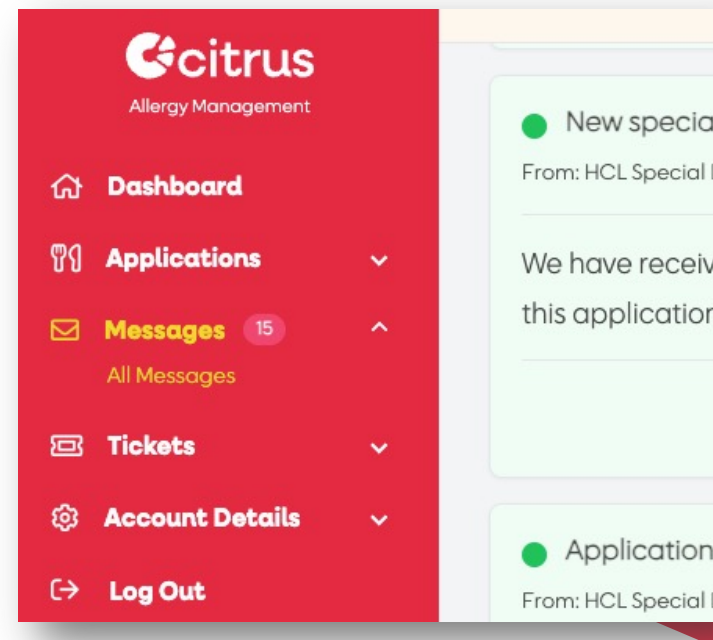
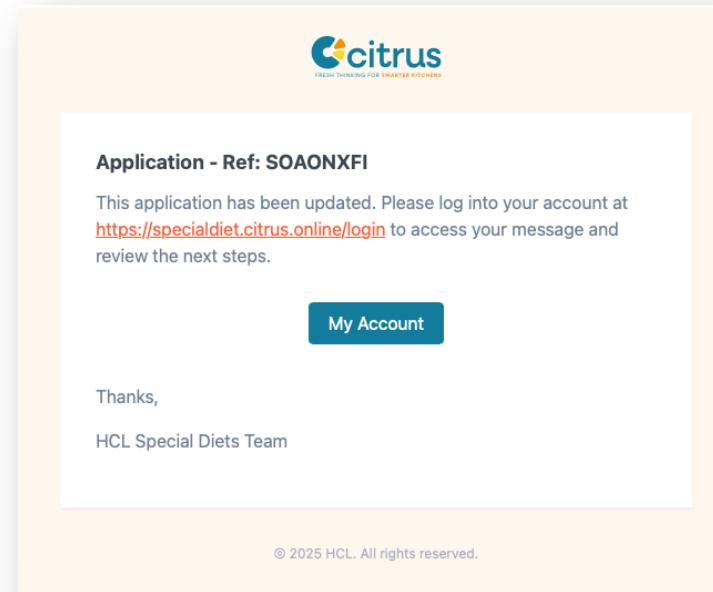
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Once logged in you will see a notification that you have new messages.

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Click messages and read the message that has been sent to you. If we need to ask a specific question about the application or send you a message, then this will be displayed in the message.



Accessing an Application

Step 4

The message will display the details of the application.

Step 5

Select view application.

Step 6

The application screen will display the menu and type of menu that has been requested, the name of the child, a photo and the class or year group as entered by the parent. If you have an action to complete this will be displayed on the application screen.

New special diet application

From: HCL Special Diets Team

4 August 2025 at 07:35

Application Reference:
KVAJKY14

Child Name:
Annie Wetton

School:
Hunsdon Junior Mixed and Infant School

We have received this new application for a special diet menu. Please would you check this application against your school records and confirm that the child is on roll.

You will receive notification when the menu is ready along with a date when the child can start to eat a special diet lunch.

View Application

Delete

Further information required

Application Expires: 3rd December 2025

Action Application

No Further Action Required

Return to application list

Application Details

Menu Information

Application Type

Student Information

Name

Parent Information

Name

Accessing Applications through the dashboard

You can also access a list of all the pending applications by selecting applications from the side menu.

This screen shows the applications that you need to approve or reject. And you can access completed and approved applications from this screen as well.

Here's how you access the completed applications:

In the top right-hand corner, you can switch between in progress and approved applications as shown.

Once selected the screen will show all approved applications at your school. You will then be able to view a completed application by selecting "view".

Dashboard > Applications

Search applications...

✓ In Progress
Approved

Reference	First name	Last name	School	Type	Status	Last updated	AMS / FOS	
7RNLZJRN	Soraya	Sokoli	Camps Hill Primary School	● Allergy	Pending	11/06/2025 09:34	AMS	View
AVWAFCYH	Abdul	Hakim	Thornhill Primary School	● Cultural / Lifestyle	Further information required	11/06/2025 08:27	FOS	View
43WHIT4X	Amna	Zahir	Thornhill Primary School	● Cultural / Lifestyle	Pending	08/06/2025 21:56	FOS	View

How do I confirm that a child is on roll?

As HCL do not know if the information about the child is correct or that they attend your school, the next step for you is to confirm that the child is on roll.

The following steps are based on approving an application.

Step 1 – Review the application and confirm that the child is on roll at your school.

Step 2 – If the child is on your roll, simply go to the select status drop down and select “approve”.

Step 3 – At this stage you will have the option to send the HCL team a message if required. If not required, then you can proceed to the next step. (For instance, you may want to let us know that the photo of the child does not look like them in which case we will message the parent to update the image.)

Step 4 – Click “submit”.

Step 5 – That’s it – you have approved an application.

You can now click return to application list to process any other applications.



What do I do if the child is not on roll at the school?

As HCL do not know if the information about the child is correct or that they attend your school, the next step for you is to confirm that the child is on roll.

We have given you the ability to reject an application if a child is not on roll at your school or has left the school. It is also sometimes feasible that a parent may have selected the wrong school for the application.

Please note that new year intakes will need to be checked and confirmed so if you don't recognise the child from the photo, please check the roll for the child's name.

This is the process for rejecting an application.

Step 1 – Review the application and confirm that the child is NOT on roll at your school.

Step 2 – If the child is on your roll, simply go to the select status drop down and select “Reject”.

Step 3 – Add a message to explain why you are rejecting the application so that HCL can communicate with the parent.

Step 4 – Click Submit



Accessing Approved Applications

Once applications are approved, we will send you a confirmation message via the portal (you will receive an email update telling you to log in to the portal).

At this stage you will need to access the approved application, download the menu and the poster for the child, print them off and pass to the kitchen.

Here is how you access the documents:

Step 1 – Once logged in you will see a message saying that an application has been approved.

Step 2 – Click view application.

Step 3 – This will open the application that has been approved

Step 4 – In the top right hand corner are two buttons, one to download the menu and the other to download the poster.

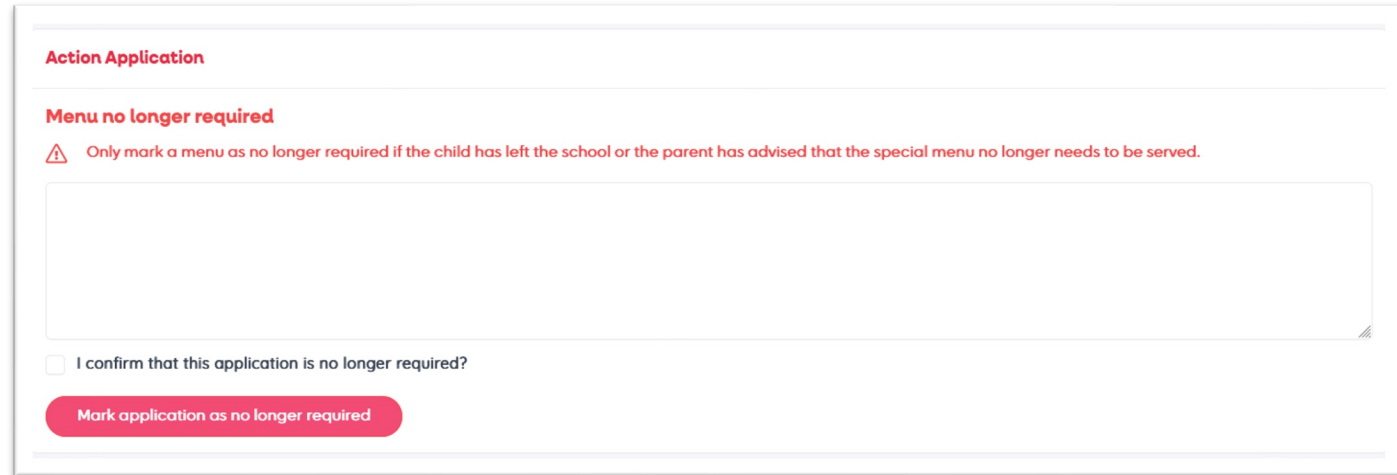
Step 5 – Please print these and pass them onto the kitchen



Leavers and no longer required menus

The portal has been designed so that you can easily tell us if a child has left the school or no longer requires a special menu. This functionality is especially useful at the end of the school year when year six leave.

To do this you will need to access the approved applications screen as described in the previous sections.



Action Application

Menu no longer required

 Only mark a menu as no longer required if the child has left the school or the parent has advised that the special menu no longer needs to be served.

☐ I confirm that this application is no longer required?

Mark application as no longer required

Step 1 – Access the approved applications screen.

Step 2 – Find the application and click view.

Step 3 – Update the no longer required section with a message and select confirm and then mark as no longer required.

Got a question or need some help?

Please contact the HCL office on 01707 938 625 and ask for a member of the Nutritionist Team who will be on hand to help with any queries.

