

# Direct Certification Upload Process for Private Schools



Connecticut State Department of Education  
School Health, Nutrition and Family Services  
450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504  
Hartford, CT 06103-1841

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## Direct Certification Upload Process for Private Schools

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/DirectCert/Direct\\_Certification\\_Upload\\_Private\\_Schools.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/DirectCert/Direct_Certification_Upload_Private_Schools.pdf)

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1. mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

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## CSDE Contact Information

For questions regarding direct certification, please contact the school nutrition programs staff in the CSDE’s Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education. For a complete listing of Child Nutrition Programs staff, review the CSDE’s *Child Nutrition Staff and Responsibilities*.

School Nutrition Programs Staff	
County	Consultant
<b>Fairfield County</b> (includes Region 9) <b>Litchfield County</b> (includes Regions 1, 6, 7, 12, and 14)	Fionnuala Brown 860-807-2129 <a href="mailto:fionnuala.brown@ct.gov">fionnuala.brown@ct.gov</a>
<b>Hartford County</b> (includes Region 10) <b>Middlesex County</b> (includes Regions 4, 13, and 17)	Teri Dandeneau 860-807-2079 <a href="mailto:teri.dandeneau@ct.gov">teri.dandeneau@ct.gov</a>
<b>New Haven County</b> (includes Regions 5, 15, and 16)	Greg King 860-713-6804 <a href="mailto:greg.king@ct.gov">greg.king@ct.gov</a>
<b>New London County</b> <b>Tolland County</b> (includes Regions 8 and 19) <b>Windham County</b> (includes Region 11)	Susan Alston 860-807-2081 <a href="mailto:susan.alston@ct.gov">susan.alston@ct.gov</a>
Connecticut State Department of Education School Health, Nutrition and Family Services Child Nutrition Programs 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504 Hartford, CT 06103-1841	

For more information on direct certification, visit the CSDE’s [Direct Certification for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

# 1 — Upload Steps

This guide outlines the steps for the direct certification upload process for private schools. For questions regarding this process, please contact the school's assigned school nutrition consultant. For more information, refer to "[CSDE Contact Information](#)" in this document.

1. The **direct certification contact** enters the [Direct Certification Web Application](#) site by logging in with the assigned **User ID** and **password**. The first page to display will be the *Confidentiality Acknowledgement* page as shown below.
2. The user enables the application after accepting the confidentiality terms pressing the **Accept** button.

Direct Certification [Log off](#)  
Connecticut State Department of Education

Home | State Wide Search | Upload | Settings

The Direct Certification data collection contains personally identifiable information that is confidential pursuant to federal and state law. By logging onto and accessing Direct Certification, I hereby acknowledge that the information contained therein shall only be disclosed to the authorized personnel as outlined in Part 7 in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's [Eligibility Manual for School Meals](#). I further agree that I will only use this information for the Connecticut State Department of Education's conduct of business and I understand that there are penalties for improper disclosure established by the National School Lunch Act (i.e., a fine of not more than \$1000 or imprisonment of not more than one (1) year, or both, for publishing, divulging, disclosing, or making known in any manner or extent not authorized by Federal law, any eligibility information.) This includes the disclosure of eligibility information by one entity authorized under the NSLA to receive the information to any other entity, even if that entity would otherwise be authorized to receive the information directly from the determining agency.

I have read and I agree to the terms of this site.


[USDA Nondiscrimination Statement](#)  
[Connecticut State Department of Education Nondiscrimination Statement](#)

Home | State Wide Search | Upload | Settings

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# 1 | Upload Steps

3. Select **Upload** on the tab bar on the top of the page to begin the process of uploading the school's student enrollment information.



The screenshot shows the top of the CSDE Direct Certification System website. The header includes the CT.gov logo and the text "Direct Certification Connecticut State Department of Education". A navigation bar contains links for "Home", "State Wide Search", "Upload", and "Settings". The "Upload" link is highlighted with a red circle and a red arrow. Below the navigation bar, the page content includes a "Welcome to the CSDE Direct Certification System" section, a "Direct Certification Mission" section with a paragraph of text, a "News" section with a red reminder, and a "Direct Certification Contact" section with contact information for the Direct Certification Help Desk.

Direct Certification  
Connecticut State Department of Education

Home State Wide Search **Upload** Settings

### Welcome to the CSDE Direct Certification System

**Direct Certification Mission**

In SY 2009-2010, Connecticut's direct certification rate for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) was at 56 percent, well below the national rate of 72 percent (*Direct Certification in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP): State Implementation Progress, Report to Congress*). Based on this low rate, Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) applied for and was awarded a USDA Direct Certification Planning Grant and a Direct Certification Grant. This grant enabled the CSDE and Connecticut's Department of Social Services (CDSS) to complete a comprehensive gap analysis to better identify the underlying reasons for Connecticut's low direct certification rate from both the state agency and the end users' perspectives, and to apply this knowledge to develop priority recommendations for systems improvement. The goal of the Direct Certification Project is to meet or exceed USDA benchmarks for direct certification rates through system enhancements to create and implement a fully automated, state-level direct certification and matching system that is highly responsive to State and Local Education Agency (LEA) needs.

**News**

*Reminder: The Web Application is updated on Monday unless Monday is a holiday. Therefore, please wait until Tuesday (or Wednesday if applicable) to check for updates AND do not forget to check Case Management weekly.*

**Direct Certification Contact**

The following contact is to be used for the sole purpose of Direct Certification only! In the event that you have student enrollment or demographic questions, please contact the appropriate resources at the local LEA level, or at the State Department of Education <http://www.sde.ct.gov>

**Direct Certification Help Desk**  
(860) 713-6681

Home State Wide Search Upload Settings

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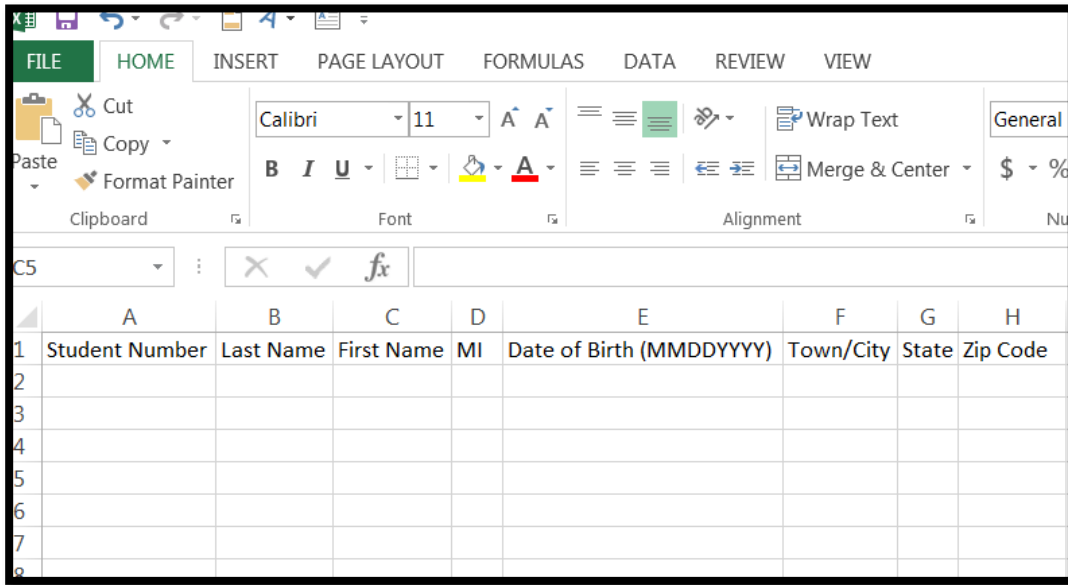
- The **Student Information File Upload** page displays. Click on **“here”** to download the *Private School Enrollment Template*. This template must be used to upload the school’s enrollment data to be matched against the Department of Social Services (DSS) client list to determine if the student is automatically eligible for free meal/milk benefits.
  - ▶ **Important:** Data must be saved in a CSV (Comma Separated Variable) format, with the extension **.csv**. This is the only file layout that works with the matching process.



The screenshot shows the 'Direct Certification' page on the CT.gov website, managed by the Connecticut State Department of Education. The page features a navigation bar with links for 'Home', 'State Wide Search', 'Upload', and 'Settings'. A red arrow points to a blue link labeled 'here' in the text 'Please click [here](#) to download student information upload template.' Below this text is a file upload interface consisting of a text input field, a 'Browse...' button, and an 'Upload File' button. The footer of the page includes the same navigation links and a copyright notice for 2021 State of Connecticut.

# 1 | Upload Steps

5. The template appears. For ease of use, the template will look like an Excel spreadsheet:



- ▶ Certain fields **are required**, while others are optional. For example, a student identifying number must be assigned to each student and must be unique to each student enrolled in the school. If the students do not have a number, a sequential number can be assigned for each student (e.g., 1,2,3,4,5... or 0,2,4,6,8...). The required fields outlined below:

Field	Required
Student Number	Yes
Last Name	Yes
First Name	Yes
Middle Initial	No (optional)
Date of Birth	Yes (in this format: MMDDYYYY (e.g., 02042008))
Town/City	No (optional)
State	No (optional)
Zip Code	No (optional)

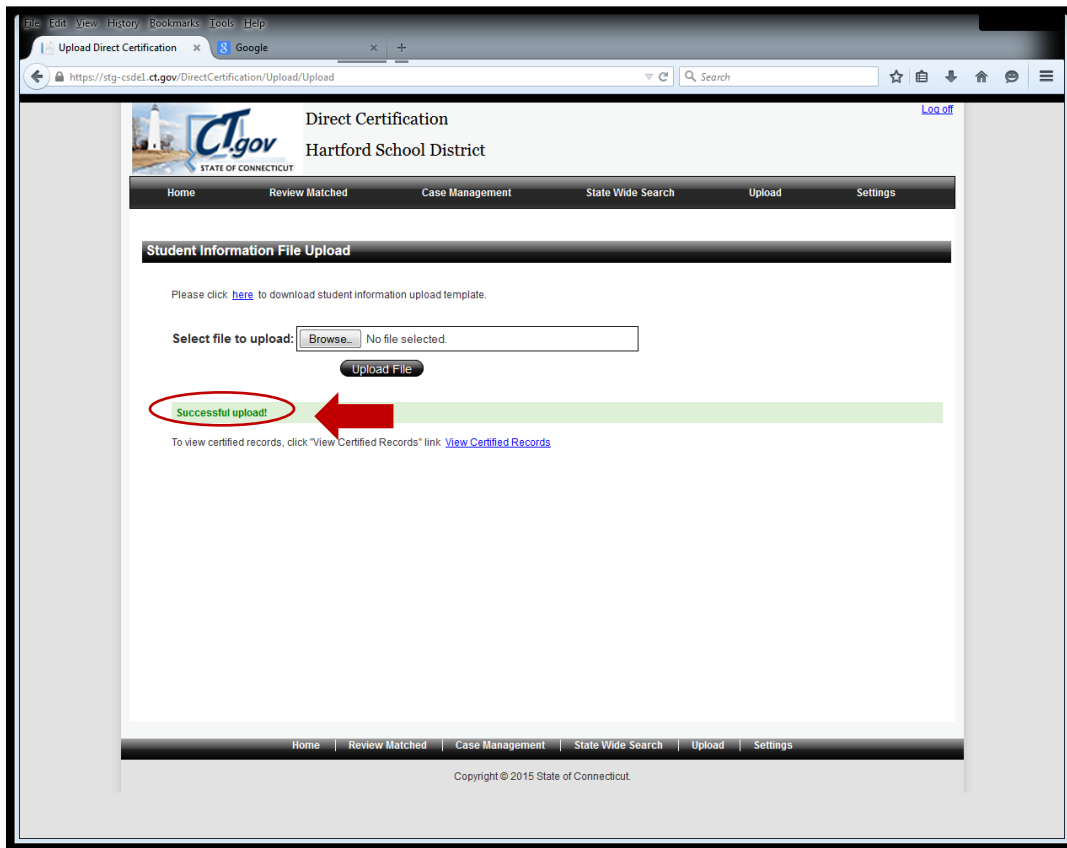


▶ **Additional Requirements**

- **Student number** allows for up to a maximum of 10 characters.
- Full **student names** must be entered into the spreadsheet. Do not use nicknames or shorter versions of names.
- **Date of birth** must be in the **MMDDYYYY** format (e.g., 02042008). Note that the leading zero will not appear when entering the date. For example, 02152004 will appear as 2152004. Do not use dashes, hyphens, or slashes between the numbers.
- When the data is completely entered into the file, the file **MUST be saved as a CSV file**, with the extension of **.csv**. The template will default to this extension. In addition, the Upload template appears as an Excel Program Spreadsheet for Schools to enter enrollment data. However, when saved as a CSV file, an information message may appear indicating that some Excel functions may be lost. Press the “Save” button since the Excel function is not used in the CSV file.

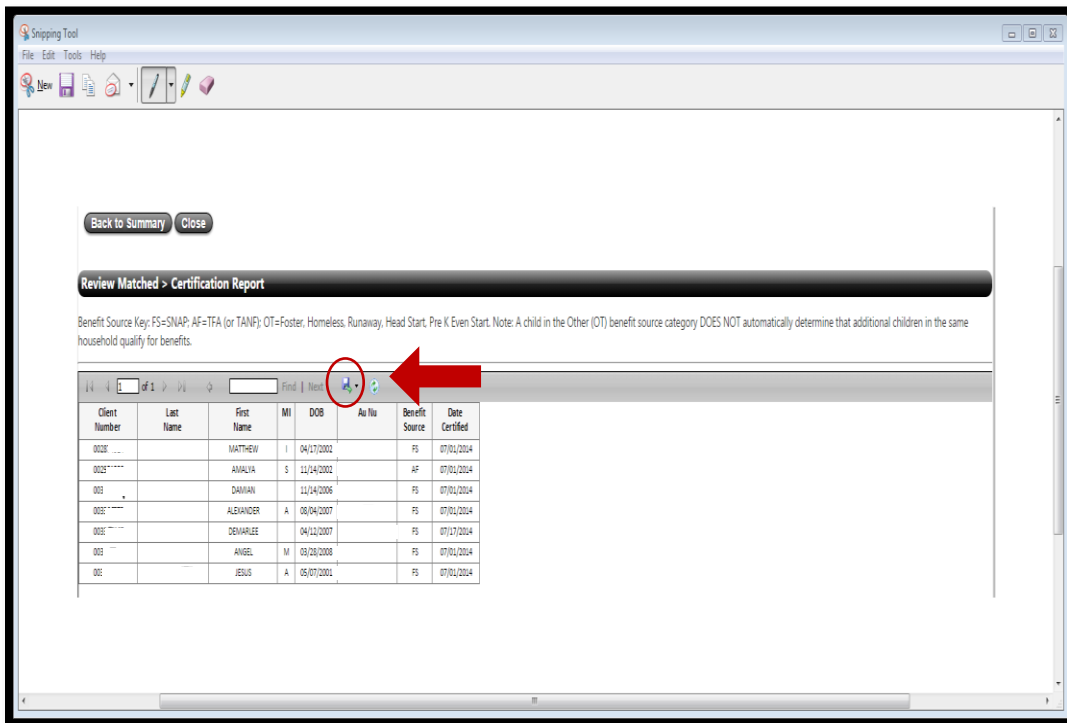
# 1 | Upload Steps

6. After completing and saving the file, the user can upload the file. The user has the option of **entering the name** of the saved file or pressing the **Browse** button to search the directories for the location of the saved file. After the file is selected, press the **Upload File** button. The match process will begin.
  - ▶ If there are **errors** in the file, a message will display with the line number and error description. The Upload File process will begin again once the errors are corrected.
  - ▶ Once completed, the user will receive a **“Successful upload”** message on the screen as shown below.



7. After the match process is successful, the **matched report** will display on the screen. To download the report, select the **small blue data disk button** on the report header. Multiple options will be available to save the report, e.g., Excel, CSV, XML, and Word.

► **Important:** The CSDE does **not** store private school data. Private schools are responsible for saving this data for future reporting requirements and audit purposes.



### Important Points to Remember

- The user must use the **.csv template** when uploading files.
- The user can repeat the upload process multiple times.
- The user must **save** the file in the format of their choice in order to keep the results. The CSDE does not save the matched data for private schools.
- To validate an individual student, the CSDE recommends using the **State Wide Search** function. If a match is found, save a copy of the screen as evidence for future reporting/auditing.
- If the user has a student that **did not match** on the report and the school believes the student should have matched, the direct certification contact person should use the **State Wide Search**. This allows for partial name searches. It is possible that the DSS client list and the school enrollment name and/or date of birth can be recorded differently for a student.
- Refer to the USDA's *Eligibility Manual for School Meals* for questions regarding direct certification and eligibility.

## 2 — Resources

Direct Certification for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Direct-Certification>

Eligibility Manual for School Meals (USDA):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Forms/FreeRed/USDA\\_eligibility\\_manual.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Forms/FreeRed/USDA_eligibility_manual.pdf)











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