

# **Direct Certification Upload Process for Private Schools**

Connecticut State Department of Education  
Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs  
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Hartford, CT 06103-1841

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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

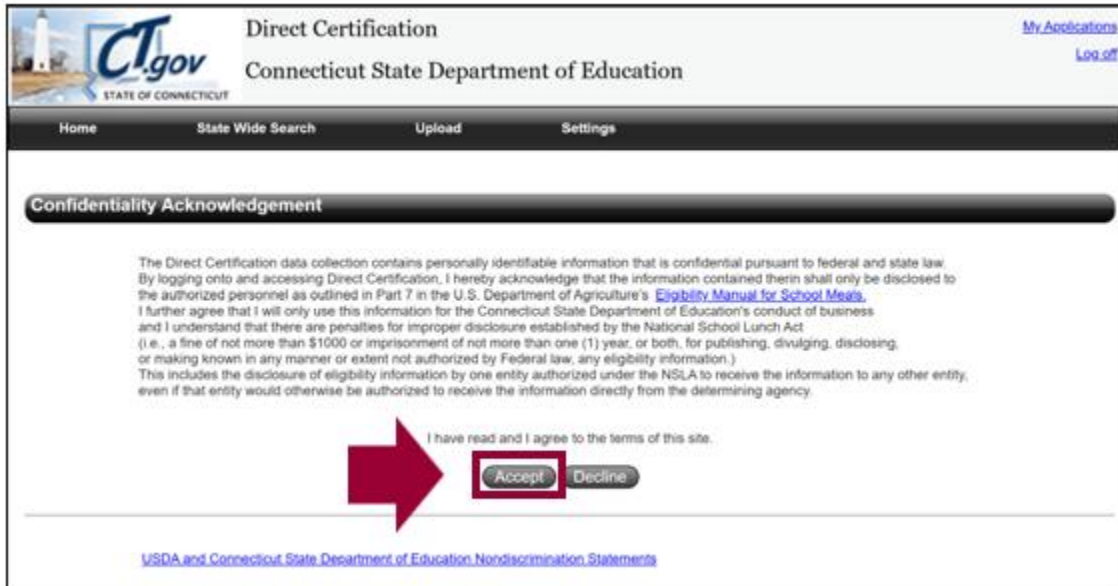
For questions regarding direct certification, please contact the school nutrition programs staff in the CSDE's Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs. The CSDE's resource, [County Assignments for School Nutrition Programs](#), indicates each Connecticut county's assigned CSDE school nutrition team member who provides technical assistance for the USDA school nutrition programs. For a list of all CSDE Child Nutrition Programs staff, refer to the CSDE's [Child Nutrition Staff and Responsibilities](#).

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  
Connecticut State Department of Education

My Applications  
Log off

Home State Wide Search Upload Settings

### Confidentiality Acknowledgement

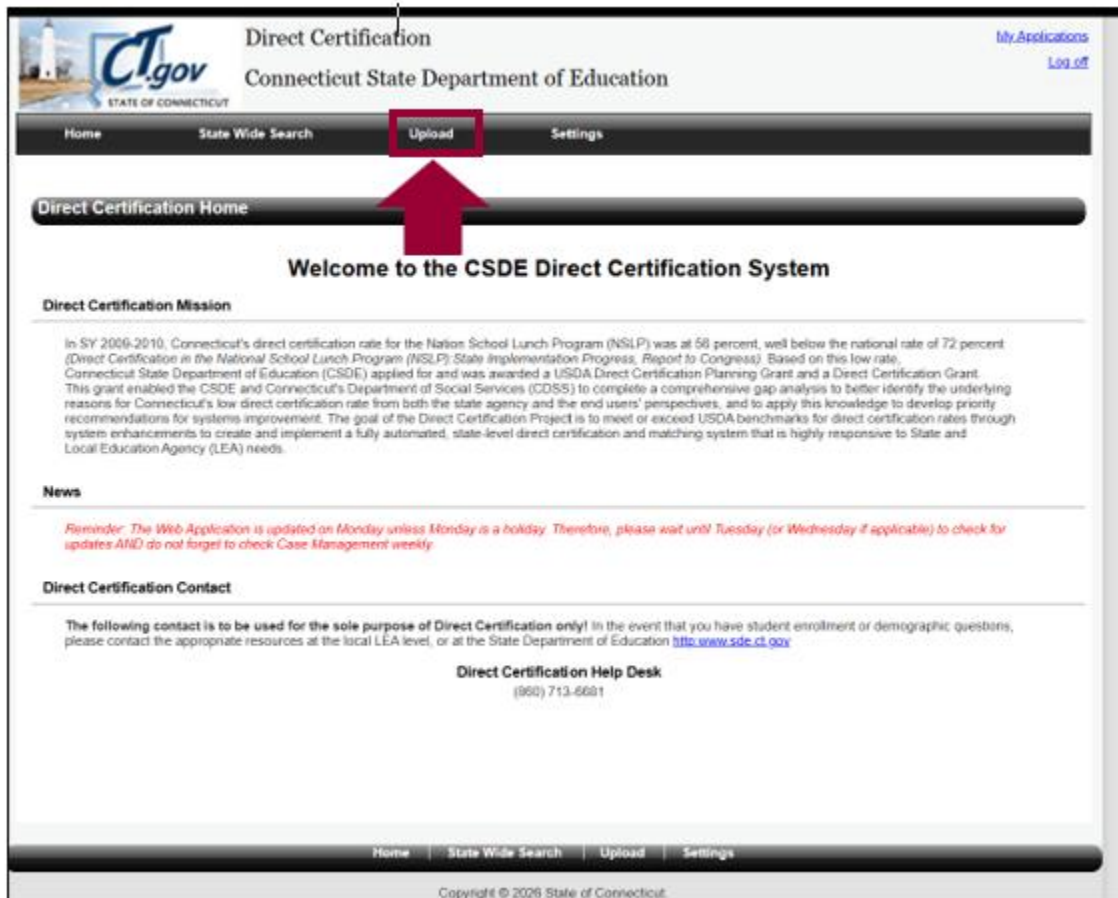
The Direct Certification data collection contains personally identifiable information that is confidential pursuant to federal and state law. By logging onto and accessing Direct Certification, I hereby acknowledge that the information contained therein shall only be disclosed to the authorized personnel 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 and Connecticut State Department of Education Nondiscrimination Statements](#)

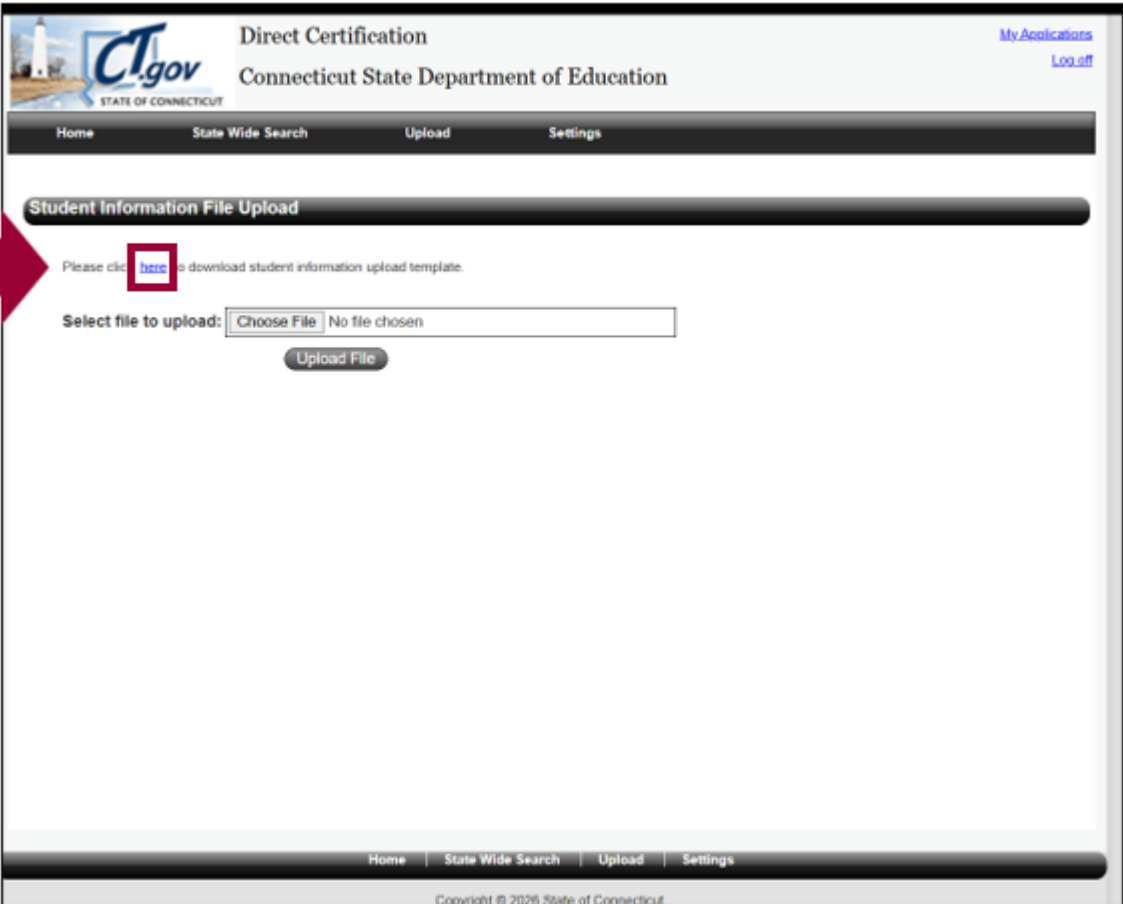
## 1 | Upload Steps

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



4. 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.

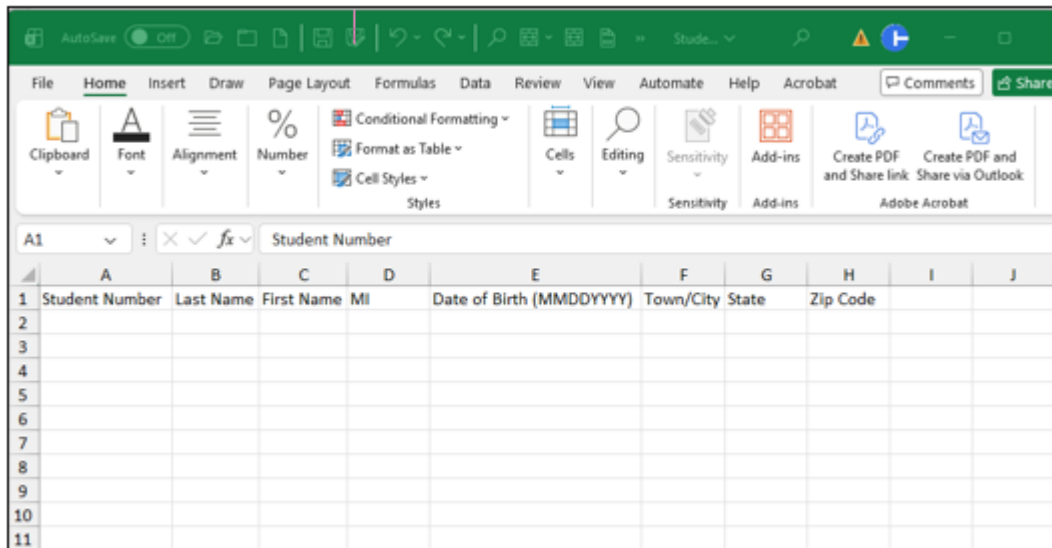
**Important:** Data must be saved in a CSV (Comma Separated Variable) format, with the extension .csv. This is the only file layout that works with the matching process.



The screenshot shows the 'Student Information File Upload' page. At the top, the header includes the CT.gov logo, 'Direct Certification', and 'Connecticut State Department of Education'. Navigation links for 'Home', 'State Wide Search', 'Upload', and 'Settings' are present. On the right, there are links for 'My Applications' and 'Log off'. The main heading is 'Student Information File Upload'. Below it, a text prompt says 'Please click [here](#) to download student information upload template.' A red arrow points to the 'here' link. Below this is a file selection area with the text 'Select file to upload:' followed by a button labeled 'Choose File' and the text 'No file chosen'. An 'Upload File' button is located below the file selection area. The footer contains the same navigation links as the header and a copyright notice: 'Copyright © 2020, State of Connecticut'.

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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 are summarized below:

### Summary of required and optional fields

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

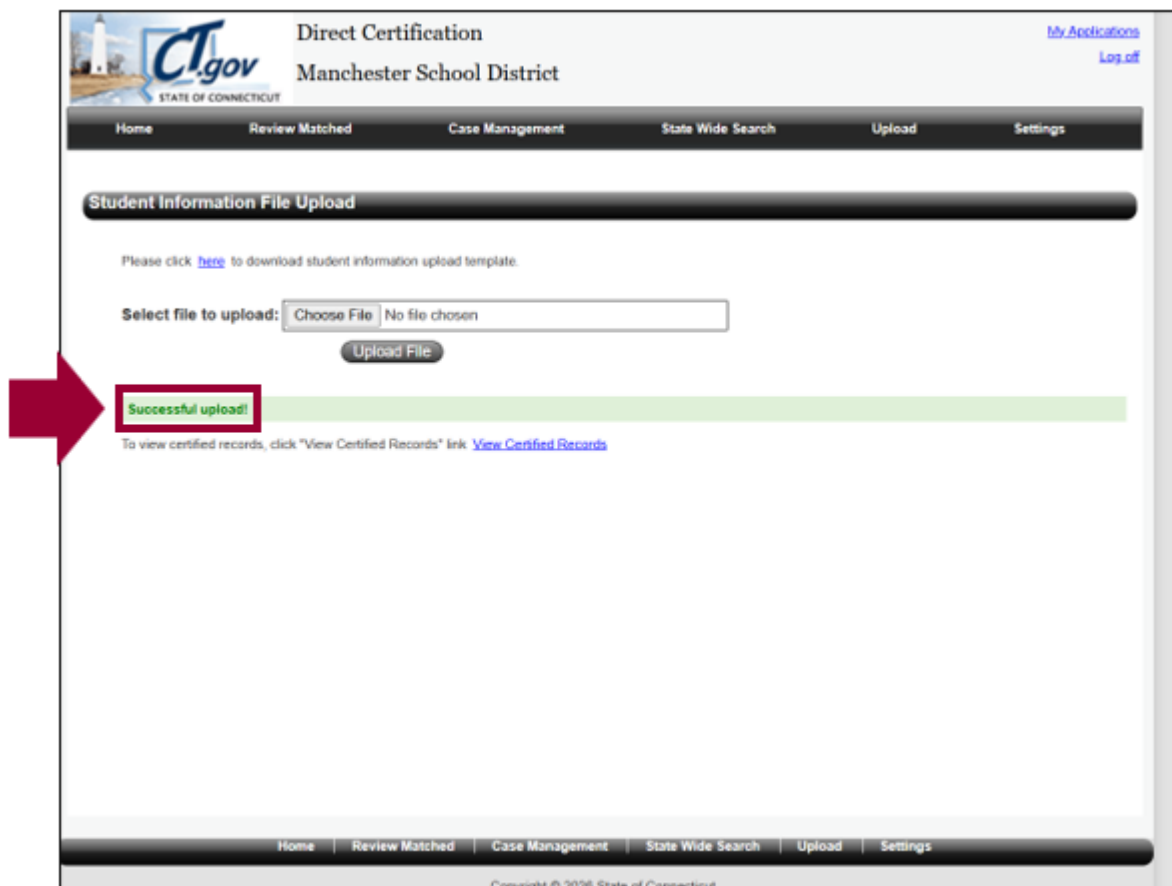
### Additional Requirements

- **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.

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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



- 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.

[Back to Summary](#)   [Close](#)

### Review Matched > Direct Certification & S-EBT Report

The following records have been matched to the PSIS SASID module and Direct Certification data bases. Status on Direct Certification has been set to Certified. The student names with the Benefit Source Key: FS = SNAP; AF = TFA (or TANF); FM = Free Medicaid, RM = Reduced Medicaid, and OT = Other (Foster Child).  
Note: A child in the Other (OT) benefit source category DOES NOT automatically determine that additional children in the same household qualify for benefits.

Effective School Year 2025-26, two **new** benefit sources that are associated with the Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (S-EBT) program will be used - **FE = Free S-EBT** and **RE = Reduced free or reduced-price meals** without the household needing to submit a meal application to the local education agency (LEA). Since eligibility is based on an application that was submitted does not need to verify these S-EBT students.  
Also, a student's eligibility with the codes FE or RE does NOT extend to other children in the household.  
*Because they are not considered a Directly Certified benefit source, DO NOT include students with the FE and RE benefit sources in the Directly Certified pool on October 1 for FNS 742 Section*

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| SASID | Client Number | Last Name | First Name | MI | DOB | Street Number | Street | City | Zip Addr | Au Num | Benefit Source | Date Certified | School Name |
|-------|---------------|-----------|------------|----|-----|---------------|--------|------|----------|--------|----------------|----------------|-------------|
|-------|---------------|-----------|------------|----|-----|---------------|--------|------|----------|--------|----------------|----------------|-------------|

### Important Considerations

- 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](https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/direct-certification) (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/direct-certification>

[Eligibility Manual for School Meals](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/forms/freered/usda_eligibility_manual.pdf) (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)

