



Dear parent/carer,

Free School Meals eligibility check: action by 21/08/26

Free School Meals are changing from September 2026, and more families may be able to get help. From the start of the 2026 to 2027 academic year, children in households receiving Universal Credit will be entitled to Free School Meals. At the same time, the current transitional protection arrangements will end, so eligibility will need to be checked again to make sure children continue to receive the right support.

What you need to do

To help us confirm eligibility and make sure no child misses out, **all parents and carers are encouraged to complete the short Free School Meals form**, even if your child already receives a free meal or is in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2.

Please complete the form by **21/08/26**. It only takes a few minutes, and you will need details such as your name, address, your child's name and your National Insurance number.

The form also asks for permission for the local authority to carry out routine eligibility rechecks on an ongoing basis. This helps reduce the need for parents and carers to complete repeated checks and means your child can be picked up automatically if they become eligible at a future check.

[Complete the Free School Meals form](#)

(Click the link above to complete the form, or scan the QR code at the top right of this letter)

Why this matters

Completing the form helps the school and local authority:

- check whether your child is entitled to Free School Meals from September 2026
- record the correct Free School Meals category for school census and funding purposes
- protect any extra support and funding your child's school may be able to receive

If your child is in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2

If your child is in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2, they will continue to receive Universal Infant Free School Meals regardless of income or benefits. However, completing this form is still important because it may help your child's school access additional funding to support learning, wellbeing and wider opportunities.

Other support your family may be able to access

Completing the form may also help families access other support where available. Free School Meals eligibility is often used as evidence for wider support, such as reduced costs for school trips and activities, clubs, bursaries, scholarships, or other forms of financial support. It may also help eligible children access the Holiday Activities and Food programme, which can provide free holiday activities

and meals during school holidays. In later education, it may also help provide context for applications where organisations consider a young person's background and circumstances.

Free School Meals can make a real difference to family budgets and help ensure children have access to a healthy meal during the school day. For families receiving Universal Credit, the September 2026 changes may mean support is available even where you have not qualified before.

Please complete the form as soon as you can

Please complete the form as soon as you can so eligibility can be checked before the new school year. This will help avoid any delay in your child receiving meals and will support schools to record the correct information for the October 2026 census.

Thank you for completing the form and helping us make sure support is in place for September.