

Free School Meals are changing from September 2026



What is changing? All children in households receiving Universal Credit will be entitled to Free School Meals from September 2026. Income levels will no longer restrict access.

Targeted FSM

For families in receipt of Universal Credit with household earnings of £7,400 or less per year.

Includes:

- Free school meals
- Extra funding for schools (Pupil Premium)

Expanded FSM

For families in receipt of Universal Credit with earnings above £7,400.

Includes:

- Free school meals only

Please be aware: Current free school meals transitional protections end in July 2026. If you are no longer in receipt of an eligible benefit, your free school meals will stop at the end of the 25/26 school year.

Who can apply?

You may be eligible if you receive:

- Universal Credit
- Income-related ESA
- Pension Credit (guarantee element)
- Support under the Immigration and Asylum Act
- Or meet criteria for families with no recourse to public funds

How to apply

If you receive Universal Credit and are not already receiving free school meals, you can apply:

- Visit your school's website and complete the online application
- You will need your National Insurance number to apply
- If you need support to apply, contact your school by phone or email

Why apply?

- Families save money
- Eligible children will continue to receive a free school meal
- The school gets funding to provide the meal, and could claim extra funding to support pupils
- Children receive a balanced and nutritious meal, supporting healthy growth, wellbeing and concentration

Free school meals for Reception, Year 1 and Year 2

All children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 will still receive a free school meal. If you claim Universal Credit or other eligible benefits, it is very important you make an application on your school website. If you don't make an application, your school will not receive the correct funding.

Don't miss out - check today. Free School Meals can make a real difference to a child's wellbeing, health and learning. For more information, please visit [Free school meals | Trafford Council](#) or scan the QR code.

