



IMPORTANT CHANGES to Free School Meals

from
September
2026

The Government has expanded eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM), meaning more families than ever may now qualify.



If you receive Universal Credit but haven't claimed free school meals before:

Your child will be eligible from September 2026, therefore you will need to apply.



If your child is already in receipt of benefits related to free school meals:

Your application will be checked automatically before September 2026.



Even if your child is in Reception, Year 1, or Year 2:

And already receives Universal Infant Free School Meals, it is still important to apply.



Who should apply?

We strongly encourage you to apply if your household receives any of the following:



Universal Credit



Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)



The guaranteed element of Pension Credit



Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999



Why apply?

Applying for Free School Meals can:



Reduce the cost of school lunches



Ensure your child receives a healthy meal each day



Enable your child's school to access additional funding to support their education and wellbeing

This additional funding helps schools provide support such as:



Extra Teaching Support



Pastoral Care



Additional Learning Resources

When and how to apply



Applications open on
Monday, 1 June 2026

To ensure support is in place from the start of the new school year in September 2026, we recommend applying as soon as possible.



Apply online via the Beyond Portal:
[Online FSM Application](#)



Need help?

We understand that checking eligibility or completing application forms can sometimes be confusing. If you are unsure whether you qualify, we still encourage you to apply or contact us for confidential advice and support.



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