

FREE SCHOOL MEALS

From September 2026, there will be three types of free school meals entitlement.

What's changing?

At the start of the academic year, Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility is expanding, but transitional protections are ending. This means that some families may lose eligibility, whilst others gain it.

Since 2018, children who became eligible for FSM have been allowed to keep them, even if their family circumstances changed. This protection will end at the end of the current school year.

From September 2026, every child will need to meet the eligibility criteria again (via a recheck) to continue receiving FSM.

What parents/carers need to do

If you haven't already, please provide your details to your child's school

- Your child's school will let you know if they need any more information from you
- Your details are usually requested when your child starts or moves school
- Most parents/carers have already provided the details needed for checking



TARGETED FREE SCHOOL MEALS



Equivalent to benefits-related Free School Meals (FSM)

Who qualifies

- Children and young people in families receiving Universal Credit with annual household income under £7,400 (£616.67/month)
- Families with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) – subject to separate criteria

This gives access to

- Free school meals at school during term-time
- Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme
- Other support that may be available at school (e.g. free school milk, where provided)
- Free board and lodging on residential trips

Funding

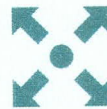
- Schools do not receive specific funding for these meals*
- Schools receive FSM Pupil Premium funding for these claims

Eligibility checks

- Eligibility will be checked in line with Government guidance
- Applicants confirmed as eligible



EXPANDED FREE SCHOOL MEALS



New criteria from September 2026

Who qualifies

- Children and young people in families receiving Universal Credit
- No limit on annual household income

This gives access to

- Free school meals at school during term-time

This doesn't give access to

- HAF (unless through other criteria e.g. SEND, social care)
- Other support linked to TFSM

Funding

- Schools do not receive specific funding for these meals*
- Schools will not receive FSM Pupil Premium funding for these claims

Eligibility checks

- Eligibility will be checked in line with Government guidance
- Applicants confirmed as eligible remain eligible for the full academic year

* Government funding will be paid to schools between 2026 and 2029 towards the cost of increased FSM reported at Census

UNIVERSAL INFANT FREE SCHOOL MEALS



Available since September 2014

Who qualifies

- All children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 attending school, regardless of family circumstances

This gives access to

- Free school meals at school during term-time

This doesn't give access to

- HAF (unless through other criteria e.g. SEND, social care)
- Other support linked to TFSM

Funding

- Schools receive Government funding towards the cost of these meals (based on average uptake recorded at the October and January Census dates)
- Schools do not receive FSM Pupil Premium funding for these children, unless they are also recorded as TFSM

Eligibility checks

- Eligibility checks are not required for UIFSM (eligibility should still be checked for TFSM/EFSM)



 **Milton Keynes City Council**

Please visit: www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/fsm for more information

ANY QUESTIONS?

School meals arrangements vary from school to school. Please contact your child's school with any questions