

Free School Meals Changes – Information to Parents

We are writing to let you know about changes to Free School Meals (FSM) eligibility from **1 September 2026**.

Expansion of Free School Meals eligibility

From September 2026, new expanded entitlements mean children in households receiving Universal Credit will be able to qualify for a free school meal, regardless of household earnings.

From September 2026 there will be two types of Free School Meals eligibility:

- Targeted FSM eligibility – based on the existing benefits-related eligibility criteria
- Expanded FSM eligibility – available to all households receiving Universal Credit

Some additional support for families and additional government funding for the school is still be linked to Targeted FSM eligibility.

For this reason, it is important that families continue to apply for free school meals, even if meals are already provided free of charge.

End of current FSM eligibility protections

Previously, once a child was confirmed as eligible for free school meals, they remained eligible even if their family's circumstances changed. This arrangement was known as *transitional protections*.

From September 2026, transitional protections will no longer apply. Eligibility for free school meals will instead be determined by a family's current circumstances and will need to be checked regularly.

As a result, some children may become newly eligible for free school meals, while others may no longer qualify if their household income or benefit entitlement changes.

Important: You still need to apply!

Free school meals are not automatically awarded, even if you receive Universal Credit. Families must still complete an application and share their details with their school.

While all primary school children attending a state-funded school in Hammersmith & Fulham currently receive funded meals through the Mayor of London's universal lunches programme. Families who receive Universal Credit should still apply for free school meals, as this may:

- provide access to additional support for families
- help the school receive additional funding to support pupils

How to apply

To apply for free school meals, please: **(insert your preferred collection method)**

Paper form: available from the school office

We encourage families to apply as soon as possible so that eligibility checks can be completed as soon as possible and eligible pupils can receive their entitlement without delay.