Free school meals

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

Some children may no longer be entitled to free school meals, whereas others may become eligible for the first time.

The three types of free school meals entitlement follow.

Targeted free school meals (TFSM)

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 a 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 programme (HAF) known as FUEL in Kingston, Richmond, and Windsor and Maidenhead
- ✓ other support that may be available at school (eg, free milk where provided)

Eligibility checks

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

Expanded free school meals (EFSM)

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 does not give access to:

- ✗ FUEL (HAF)
- ✗ other support linked to TFSM

Eligibility checks

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

Universal infant free school meals (UIFSM)

Who qualifies

- All children in primary school, regardless of family circumstances

This gives access to:

- ✓ free school meals at school during term time

This does not give access to

- ✗ FUEL (HAF)
- ✗ other support linked to TFSM

Eligibility checks

- Eligibility checks are not required

If your child is affected by food insecurity over the school holidays and is not in receipt of targeted free school meals, please contact fuel@achievingforchildren.org.uk

What parents and carers need to do

If you haven't already done so, 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.
- If you have any specific queries re school meal arrangements please contact your child's school directly.

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