



Free School Meals

Education, Participation and Skills
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Date July 2026

My Ref

Your Ref

Dear Parent/Carer

Important Update – Free School Meals (FSM)

We are writing to inform you about important changes to the Free School Meals (FSM) process following updated government guidance.

The transitional protection for all Free School Meal (FSM) claims, which has been in place since 2018, will end this summer.

We will be reviewing eligibility and updating schools over the coming weeks.

If your child is no longer eligible following this review, you may wish to reapply in September, as additional changes to the Free School Meals come into effect.

From September, there will be two categories of Free School Meals:

- **Targeted FSM**
Students with household earnings of £7,400 or less (these students will continue to attract Pupil Premium and other associated funding, such as the Fit and Fed scheme)
- **Expanded FSM**
Families with children, in receipt of Universal Credit above this threshold (meal entitlement only)

What you need to do

If you are currently claiming Free School Meals, we will recheck your eligibility via the DfE Checking Service using the details you provide at the time of your initial application. Please note if your claim details or the applicant has changed, you will need to reapply for Free School meals.

If your child currently does not receive Free School Meals and you believe you may now be eligible, please complete an application using Plymouth City Council's online system:

<https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/free-school-meals>



Why this is important?

- Targeted FSM eligibility is linked to certain benefits
- It also ensures that the school receives essential funding.
- Children in both FSM categories will be provided with a nutritious meal during the school day

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What has changed?

The main change is that eligibility must now be reassessed rather than it continuing automatically. This helps confirm that families still meet the qualifying criteria. All claims will be reassessed each year during the summer. We will email you each year to let you know when this needs to happen.

What happens if I don't reapply due to change of circumstance?

If you do not submit a new application due to a change of claim detail such as your surname, your child's Free School Meals will end, even if you were previously eligible. This is because we will not be able to match your details with your benefit claim to show your eligibility. You will not be entitled from 1 September.

Will my child lose their meals straight away?

All children with a current FSM claim will continue to receive their meals until July 2026. We will update schools over the summer about your eligibility for September.

What benefits qualify for Free School Meals?

Eligibility is based on receiving certain benefits, such as Universal Credit. Full details are available on our website.

Does this affect Universal Infant Free School Meals?

No. Children in Reception, Year 1, and Year 2 will still receive Universal Infant Free School Meals regardless of income. However, families are still encouraged to apply, as it may provide additional support and funding for the school.

How long does the application take?

The online application is quick and simple to complete and should only take a few minutes.

What if I need help applying?

If you need help completing the application, please contact your school for support.

Kind regards,

Free School Meals