

Thursday, September 10, 2026

Dear parent/carer,

## Free School Meals eligibility check

**Free School Meals are changing from September 2026, and more families may be able to get help.**

From the start of the 2026 to 2027 academic year, children in households receiving Universal Credit will be entitled to Free School Meals. At the same time, the current transitional protection arrangements will end, so eligibility will need to be checked again to make sure children continue to receive the right support.

### What you need to do.

To help us confirm eligibility and make sure no child misses out, **all parents and carers are encouraged to complete the short Free School Meals form**, even if your child already receives a free meal or is going to be in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2.

It only takes a few minutes, and you will need details such as your name, address, your child's name and your National Insurance number.

The form also asks for permission to carry out routine eligibility rechecks on an ongoing basis. This helps reduce the need for parents and carers to complete repeated checks and means your child can be picked up automatically if they become eligible at a future check.

### [Complete the Free School Meals form](#)

**Click the link above to complete the form, or contact the school office for a paper form.**

Why this matters :-

Completing the form helps the school and local authority:

- check whether your child is entitled to Free School Meals from September 2026
- record the correct Free School Meals category for school census and funding purposes
- protect any extra support and funding your child's school may be able to receive

### If your child is in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2

If your child is in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2, they will continue to receive Universal Infant Free School Meals regardless of income or benefits. However, completing this form is still important because it



may help your child's school access additional funding to support learning, wellbeing and wider opportunities.

## Other support your family may be able to access.

Completing the form may also help families access other support where available. Free School Meals eligibility is often used as evidence for wider support, such as reduced costs for school trips and activities, clubs, bursaries, scholarships, or other forms of financial support. It may also help eligible children access the Holiday Activities and Food programme, which can provide free holiday activities and meals during school holidays. In later education, it may also help provide context for applications where organisations consider a young person's background and circumstances.

Free School Meals can make a real difference to family budgets and help ensure children have access to a healthy meal during the school day. For families receiving Universal Credit, the September 2026 changes may mean support is available even where you have not qualified before.

## Please complete the form as soon as you can.

Kind regards,

Hamstel Infant School & Nursery

