



## Important changes to Free School Meal Eligibility from September 2026

Dear Parent/Carer,

We are writing to let you know about important changes to free school meal eligibility which may mean more families can now receive support.

From September 2026, the government is expanding eligibility for [free school meals](#). Children in households receiving Universal Credit may now qualify under the updated criteria.

We encourage all families who think they may be eligible to apply, even if:

- your child currently brings packed lunches
- your child already receives meals through Infant Free School Meals (Reception, Year 1 or Year 2)
- you have previously applied and were not eligible
- your circumstances have changed recently

### Why it is important to register

Registering for free school meals can provide benefits beyond school lunches. Eligibility may also help our school access additional funding to support teaching, resources and pastoral care for pupils.

**Please note that even if your child currently receives free school meals, parents and carers will need to reapply each academic year. Once approved, entitlement will be awarded for the full academic year, regardless of any changes in circumstances.**



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Families receiving Universal Credit may also qualify for the expanded free school meals allowance. However, schools may not receive Pupil Premium funding for all children who qualify under the expanded criteria. This means it is still important to complete the registration process so that eligibility is recorded accurately and the school can access any funding available to support pupils.

### **How to apply**

Applying is quick and confidential.

Please apply through [Free School Meal website link](#) or contact the school office if you would like support with the application process.

### **Need help?**

We have provided some helpful FAQs via our website, [Meon Way Federation, Meon Way](#) click on the link to view

We understand discussing finances can feel difficult and all conversations will be handled sensitively and confidentially.

Thank you for your support.

Kind regards,  
Jill Loader

Admin Officer  
Meon Way Federation