

FREE SCHOOL MEALS

SUPPORTING OUR CHILDREN. SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES



What is changing

- Transitional protection ends in July 2026
- Families receiving Universal Credit can now apply for Free School Meals, regardless of household income.
- Some children who currently receive Free School Meals may no longer qualify, while many more families may become eligible for the first time.

If you receive certain benefits, your child could get free school meals

THE 3 TYPES OF FREE SCHOOL MEALS

1 TARGETED FREE SCHOOL MEALS (TFSM)

Equivalent to benefits-related Free School Meals.

Who qualifies:

- Children and young people in families receiving Universal Credit with an annual net earned income of £7,400 or less*
- 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 (HAF) Programme
- ✓ Support in school that may include academic interventions, support with trips and visits

2 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
- ✗ Does not give access to HAF (unless through other criteria e.g. SEND, social care)
- ✗ Other support

3 UNIVERSAL INFANT FREE SCHOOL MEALS (UIFSM)

Available since September 2014.

Who qualifies:

- All children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 attending school, regardless of family circumstances

This gives access to:

- ✓ Free school meals at school during term-time

This DOES NOT give access to:

- ✗ HAF (unless through other criteria e.g. SEND, social care)
- ✗ Other support

Your information is safe: Your details are confidential and used only to assess eligibility and claim funding for our school.

Why apply?

Extra funding for our school

Schools receive extra Pupil Premium funding (Pupil Premium) to support your child's education and wellbeing.

More support for your child

Entitled children can access support such as holiday activities, food programmes and other help at school.

No cost to you

Applying is quick, confidential and won't affect any other benefits you receive now or in the future.

Even if your child is in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2 and gets universal free meals, please still apply if you think you might be eligible (see types 1 or 2).

If your child currently receives FSM they will automatically be re-checked during the summer holiday. If you feel that under the new criteria, your child may now be eligible, then you must apply through <https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/school-pupil-support/apply-free-school-meals>

If you order meals before the check has been completed in the summer everyone will have to pay. However, if you are eligible once the check has been completed then you will be reimbursed by Ideal during Term 1.

It really does make a difference!!!



