

Free School Meals

From 1st September 2026, the Department for Education (DfE) has introduced changes to Free School Meals (FSM) meaning that more families will be able to benefit.

Why you should still apply or register:

Already receiving Free School Meals? You do not need to reapply, but we encourage families to check eligibility from June 2026 as the rules are changing.

You should still apply if:

- Your child is in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2 (they already get free meals under the Universal Infant Free School Meals programme)
- You think your child may already be eligible

Registering helps to:

- Make sure your child continues to get the support they're entitled to
- Ensure the school receives extra funding to support pupils

Not sure? It's still worth applying, it's quick, simple and confidential.

What changes from September 2026?

Good news, more families will qualify:

- All families receiving Universal Credit will be eligible
- The income limit will be removed

You will still need to apply or register so your eligibility can be confirmed.

What does this mean?

There will be two categories of benefits-based FSM:

Targeted FSM, which continues to be based on the existing threshold, covering pupils who are in households in receipt of Universal Credit with annual household earnings of £7,400 or less.

Expanded FSM, a new category covering pupils who do not qualify for targeted FSM, but who are in households receiving Universal Credit.

Note: Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) for any child in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 is still the same, but it is still worth applying.

How this helps your child & school:

By registering for Free School Meals, the school may receive extra funding (Pupil Premium).

This helps us provide:

- Extra support with learning
- Potential help towards trips, activities and resources
- Emotional wellbeing and pastoral support

This does not affect your benefits; it simply gives your child extra support.

Need help?

We're here for you. Our school office is always happy to help with applications or answer any questions. Everything you share will be kept confidential.

Alternatively, contact DCC Free School Meals via: [01629 536481](tel:01629536481), checking@derbyshire.gov.uk or visit <https://tinyurl.com/bdd5cwn2>

How to Apply:

How to Check Eligibility

1. Use the LGfL checker link to check eligibility instantly: <https://fsm.lgfl.net/>
2. Select your child's school and enter your details
3. You will receive an instant result
4. Schools will manage the next steps and process this through their usual systems

Don't want to complete the checker yourself?

Complete our school Microsoft Form by contacting your school. We can check eligibility for you instead. This option may take a little longer, as school staff will complete the checks on your behalf.

A Final Note

We know that applying for support can sometimes feel uncertain, but it's always worth checking.

If your family is eligible, this is a simple way to make sure your child gets the support they deserve and to help the school provide even more opportunities for all pupils.

If you're unsure, just ask, we're always here to help.