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## Important: Free School Meals Changes from September 2026 – Action Required

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Thank you to everyone who has already completed the application process. We'll receive outcomes over the next few weeks and will update you on your child's eligibility for 2026/27 as soon as possible.

### What's changing from September 2026?

The Department for Education is expanding Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility to **all children from households receiving Universal Credit, regardless of earnings**. However, Transitional Protection is ending this summer, so everyone now needs to be rechecked based on their current circumstances

### There are now two types of FSM eligibility:

1. **Targeted FSM** – households receiving Universal Credit with annual earnings of **£7,400 or less**
2. **Expanded FSM** – households receiving Universal Credit with annual earnings **over £7,400**

Free school meals are also available to pupils whose parents receive:

- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- The guarantee element of Pension Credit

### What you need to do now

**Everyone must apply using the new system – even if your child currently receives FSM.**

Without a new application, your child will not be eligible for FSM from September 2026, regardless of your circumstances.

### How to apply:

Visit: [Apply for free school meals | Instructions – Wigan Council](#) or scan the QR code below.



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**You'll need to enter:**

- Your name (exactly as it appears on Universal Credit statements, if applicable)
- Date of birth
- National Insurance number

**Why this matters:**

- Wigan Council will run annual checks automatically from next year
- This covers both FSM and Pupil Premium funding
- School will follow up with families who haven't applied

**Deadline:** Please complete this **as soon as possible** so we can confirm your child's entitlement for 2026/27.

**Frequently Asked Questions:****My child will be in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2 – do I still need to apply?**

Yes, please. Children in these year groups will still receive Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM), but we need you to complete the form for Pupil Premium checks, which provide additional funding to support your child's education. If the UIFSM scheme changes in the future, your checks can be carried out automatically as well as when your child moves into KS2.

**My child is in Year 6 – do I still need to complete this?**

Yes, please. Outcomes will be shared with secondary schools and could avoid a lag in allocating free school meals in September when your child starts Year 7.

**Do I need to do this every year?**

No. Once you complete this process, Wigan Council will automatically recheck your eligibility each June and update school before the next academic year.

**I don't think I'll be eligible – do I still need to apply?**

Yes. This process also covers Pupil Premium funding, and your details can be automatically rechecked if your circumstances or government criteria change. This reduces admin for everyone.

**My child currently receives FSM – do I need to reapply?**

Yes. Without reapplying through the new system, your eligibility cannot be checked and your child will not receive FSM from September 2026.

**I can't remember if I've applied – what should I do?**

Please reapply if you're unsure. The council will reconcile any duplicates – it's better to apply twice than not at all.

**I live outside of Wigan and the system doesn't recognise my address – what should I do?**

Please enter your address manually on the form. The council hopes a future upgrade will automatically recognise all addresses in due course.

**I don't have a National Insurance Number but have previously been eligible as an asylum seeker or have No Recourse to Public Funds – what do I do?**

Please contact the school office on 01942 883410 and we can advise on your circumstances and next steps.

**Can my eligibility change for next year even though I currently receive FSM?**

Yes. Only pupils who meet the new criteria will receive a FSM from September 2026. Once confirmed, eligibility remains in place for the full academic year. Wigan Council will automatically recheck before 2027/28.

### **How will I find out the outcome?**

School will notify you of your eligibility status for the next academic year once we receive confirmation from the council.

### **What happens if I don't apply?**

Your child will not be eligible for FSM from September 2026, and school will send reminders until the process is completed.

### **Paid School Meals**

For parents ordering paid school meals, there will be a small price increase from **£2.80 to £3.05** from September 2026. We've worked with our supplier to keep costs as low as possible. The School Hub will be updated with the new pricing ready for September.

### **Ordering and Cancelling Meals (all pupils)**

**All school meals (free or paid) must be ordered via School Hub by 9:30am each morning.** You can order up to 3 weeks in advance.

### **Important:**

- Children who haven't ordered will be served last and will only have the option of a wrap
- If your child is absent, **you must cancel their meal by 9:30am** or you will be charged, as meals are cooked to order

### **Need Help?**

If you have any questions, please contact the school office on **01942 883410**.

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely,  
School Office