Contact Pupil Benefits Service

020 8921 2530

Email pands.benefits@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

June 2026

Advice and Benefits Service
2nd Floor
The Woolwich Centre
35 Wellington Street
London
SE18 6HQ

Dear Parent/ Carer,

RE: Changes to free school meals eligibility from September 2026

We are getting in touch to inform you about important changes to Free School Meals (FSM) eligibility, which will take effect from September 2026.

What's changing

Under new national rules, all families receiving Universal Credit with children attending state schools - including local authority nurseries, school nurseries, primary and secondary schools, and sixth forms - will qualify for Free School Meals. This means more children will become eligible.

From 1 September 2026, there will be two categories of FSM eligibility:

1. **Expanded Free School Meals**
   - Applies to children in households receiving Universal Credit with annual earnings **above £7400.**
   - Children in this category will:
     - Qualify for free school meals only
2. **Targeted Free School Meals**
   - Applies to children in households receiving Universal Credit with annual earnings of **£7400 or less.**
   - Children in this category will:
     - Qualify for free school meals
     - Enable their schools to receive additional Pupil Premium funding
     - Be eligible for other support, including Holiday Food and Fun (subject to the additional eligibility criteria of these schemes)

Transitional protections that have been in place since 2018 will also end. This means that all children must be re-assessed under the new eligibility criteria before the start of each academic year to continue receiving free school meals.

What's not changing

There are no changes to Universal infant free school meals, or the Mayor's primary free school meals.

This means that if your child attends primary school and you do not receive Universal Credit, your child will remain entitled to a free lunch at school.

What this means for you

What you need to do next will depend on the school your child attends.

If your child attends one of the following schools:

- Alderwood Primary School
- Ark Greenwich Free School
- Boxgrove Primary School
- Brooklands Primary School
- Deansfield Primary School
- Foxfield Primary School
- Greenacres Primary School
- Halstow Primary School
- Harris Academy Greenwich
- Hawksmoor Primary School
- Horn Park Primary School
- Kidbrooke Park Primary School
- Leigh Academy Blackheath
- Leigh Academy Halley
- Millennium Primary School
- Nightingale Primary School
- Notre Dame Catholic Primary School
- Rockliffe Manor Primary School
- Rowan Wood School
- South Rise Primary School
- St. Mary's Catholic Primary School
- St. Thomas More Catholic Comprehensive School
- The John Roan School
- Timbercroft Primary School
- Willow Dene School
- Windrush Charlton Primary School
- Windrush Thamesmead Primary School
- Wingfield Primary School
- Woodhill Primary School

The school will confirm what, if anything, you need to do.

If your child attends a school in Greenwich that is not on the above list:

- Where your child already receives means-tested free school meals, the council will recheck your child's eligibility under the new criteria automatically.
    - If we require information from you to complete this check, we will contact you directly.
    - We will share the outcome with your child's school in time for the new school year.
- Where your child does not already receive means-tested free school meals, but you think you are eligible under the new criteria, you can apply on the council website: royalgreenwich.gov.uk/help-money-free-school-meals

If you have any questions, please contact: pands.benefits@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,

The Pupil Benefits Service
Royal Borough of Greenwich