

Important Update: Free School Meals

The Department for Education (DfE) has updated its guidance on Free School Meals (FSM), with important changes coming into effect from **September 2026**. Please read the following carefully to understand how this may affect your child.

From September 2026

From the 2026/2027 school year, there will be two types of FSM eligibility:

- **Targeted FSM** - this continues to be based on the current eligibility threshold. It applies to pupils in households receiving Universal Credit with annual household earnings of £7,400 or less. Pupils in this group will attract Pupil Premium funding for their school and will qualify for additional support, such as the Holiday and Activities Food Programme.
- **Expanded FSM** - This is a new category for pupils whose households receive Universal Credit but do not meet the criteria for Targeted FSM. Pupils in this group will be eligible for free school meals only.

Transitional protections for existing claims will end. This means that eligibility will no longer be protected until the end of a child's current phase of education.

Suffolk County Council will carry out checks on all pupils currently eligible for FSM between June 2026 and the start of the new school year. This will ensure schools know which pupils qualify for Targeted or Expanded FSM from September.

Applying for FSM

If you have not previously applied for Free School Meals and believe you may be eligible under the new criteria, please submit an online application via the Suffolk County Council website after 8 June 2026: [Apply for free school meals - Suffolk County Council](#).

Need More Information?

If you have any questions or are unsure whether you meet the new eligibility criteria, please contact the Free School Meals Team at: freeschoolmeals@suffolk.gov.uk.