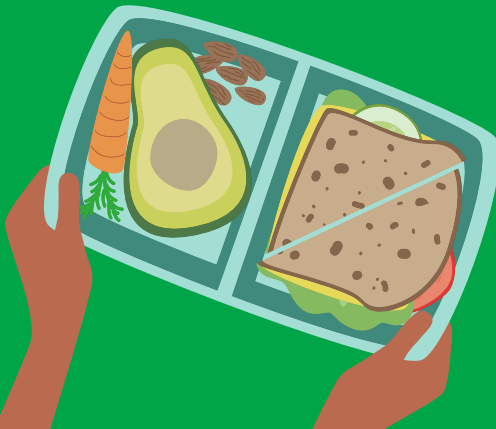


Important Changes to Free School Meals

All parents **must** re-apply.



Bracknell
Forest
Council

From September 2026, free school meals eligibility is changing.

If you think your child may qualify, please apply so their entitlement can be checked, and your school can receive Pupil Premium funding where applicable.

What is changing?

From September 2026, free school meals will be available to all children in households receiving Universal Credit. The current transitional protection arrangements will end, and eligibility will need to be checked under the new national rules for the 2026/27 school year.

All parents must re-apply for free school meals for September 2026. Previous eligibility will not automatically continue under the new rules.

(This does not apply to children who receive UIFSM; Universal Infant Free School Meals, which are provided to all eligible age groups regardless of application.)

Why apply?

- You could be eligible for Free, healthy meals for your child.
- Applying helps the school identify children who may attract additional funding.
- This funding will be invested in your child's school to improve educational outcomes.
- annual eligibility checks will now take place.
- Applying now helps make sure your child's entitlement is correctly recorded for September 2026.



Eligibility

There will be two types of eligibility:

Targeted free school meals

- Children in households receiving Universal Credit with earnings of £7,400 a year or less.
- Children from households in receipt of Universal Credit with annual household earnings of £7,400 or less.
- Households qualifying for free meals because they are in receipt of support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
- Households in receipt of Income-related Employment and Support Allowance or the guarantee element of Pension Credit or families with no recourse to public funds (NRPF).

This gives entitlement to free school meals and may help schools receive additional pupil premium funding.

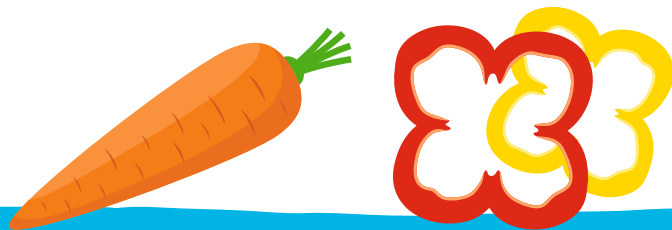
Expanded free school meals

- Children in households receiving Universal Credit with earnings above £7,400 a year.

This gives entitlement to free school meals only.

Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM)

Children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 will still receive a free school meal automatically. However, families should still apply so their eligibility can be checked, as this may help the school receive Pupil Premium funding.





When to apply

Applications for the 2026/27 school year open on **1 June 2026**. Please apply as early as possible, ideally before the end of the summer term, so arrangements are in place for September.

How to apply

Use the free school meals application form on the [Bracknell Forest website](https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk).

Further Information

For further information on the recent changes, eligibility criteria, and how the changes may affect you, please visit our website.



Need help?

If you need support completing an application or are not sure whether you qualify, contact the Free School Meals Team at: fsm@bracknell-forest.gov.uk.