

18th June 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

Re: Reminder of an Important update: Free school meals expansion from September 2026

We are writing to share some wonderful news about free school meals that will benefit many families across York, Hull, Barlby and Scarborough. From September 2026, the government is expanding free school meals to cover more children, and we want to ensure you have all the information you need about this change and how to apply for your local area.

What is changing?

Currently, free school meals are available to all children in Reception, Year 1, and Year 2. For older children, eligibility depends on certain benefit criteria. From September 2026, free school meals will be extended to **all children in households receiving Universal Credit**, removing the previous income cap of £7,400.

This means thousands more children across our Trust schools will become eligible for a free, nutritious meal each school day, helping to ease family budgets and ensure children are ready to learn. In Hull and East Yorkshire alone, an estimated 38,900 additional children will now be eligible. In Scarborough and Whitby, up to 4,160 pupils will benefit.

Eligibility criteria

Your child may be able to get free school meals from September 2026 if you receive any of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit (the previous income cap of £7,400 will be removed from September 2026)
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit (with an annual income of no more than £16,190 and not receiving Working Tax Credit)
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- No Recourse to Public Funds - [link](#)

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Important to know:

- All children in Reception, Year 1, and Year 2 already receive free school meals under the universal infant provision

How to apply

For Hull schools:

You can apply online through the My School Portal at www.hull.gov.uk/schools-2/free-school-meals. Applications are usually processed within seven days, and the school will be notified electronically if approved.

Hull City Council has successfully trialled an auto-enrolment scheme, which helped register an additional 750 pupils who were eligible but not previously claiming. The team is now recommending this process is repeated every year to ensure that pupils new to school, or those who become newly eligible, are supported quickly.

For No Recourse to public funds:

FSM application [Link](#)

Why this matters

We know that family budgets are under pressure, and providing a healthy school meal makes a real difference. Local research has shown that children receiving free school meals have improved attendance, better concentration in class, and families experience less financial stress. Every application also brings additional funding to your child's school through the Pupil Premium, supporting teaching and learning for all pupils.

Need help?

If you would like support with your application or have questions about your eligibility, please contact your child's school office in the first instance – they can often help with questions or direct you to the right local support.

We encourage all families who think they may be eligible to apply.

Yours sincerely,



Helen Nozedar
Chief Financial Officer