



Free School Meals and Pupil Premium

Could your child be entitled?

New rules
from
September
2026

Please check – it could also help your school!

The rules around Free School Meals have changed from September 2026, meaning more children may now be entitled to receive a free school meal.

If your family receives Universal Credit, your child may now be eligible for Free School Meals, even if your household income is above the previous threshold.



Two types of Free School Meals

Targeted Free School Meals

For children whose household receives Universal Credit and has annual household earnings of **£7,400 or less** (after tax and excluding benefits).

Expanded Free School Meals

For children whose household receives Universal Credit but whose earnings are above £7,400.

Only children who qualify for **Targeted Free School Meals** attract **Pupil Premium funding** for their school.

What is Pupil Premium? ★

Pupil Premium is additional government funding given to schools to support children who may face additional barriers to learning.

We can use this funding to provide extra support, resources, interventions, enrichment opportunities and other provision that helps children to achieve and thrive.



Important to know!

- Even if your child is in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2 and already receives a free school meal through Universal Infant Free School Meals, it is still **important to apply** if you think you may qualify for Targeted Free School Meals.
- Your child receiving a free meal does not automatically mean the school receives Pupil Premium funding. You need to make an application so that Cheshire East can check your eligibility.



Who should apply?

We encourage you to apply if:

- ✓ You receive **Universal Credit** and your household earnings are £7,400 or less per year.
- ✓ You receive another qualifying benefit, such as income-related Employment and Support Allowance or the guarantee element of Pension Credit.
- ✓ You think you may be eligible but are unsure.

There is no disadvantage or stigma attached to applying. The information is used to check eligibility and help schools access funding to support children.



How do I apply?

Applications are made through the **Cheshire East Parent Portal**.

You can check the latest eligibility information and apply through the Cheshire East Council website:



www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/schools/school-meals/free_school_meals.aspx

Scan the QR code to visit the Cheshire East Free School Meals application page



Every application matters. ♥

Applying could provide valuable additional funding to support children at our school.



If you are unsure or need help, please speak to the school office.



Thank you for helping us to make sure that every child receives all the support they are entitled to. ♥

