



11th September 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

Expanded free school meal (FSM) eligibility and the pupil premium

Your child may newly qualify for free school meals, and we want to encourage you to register them.

From September 2026, **all pupils in households receiving Universal Credit are eligible for free school meals.** Your household income doesn't matter – as long as you receive Universal Credit, your child can claim free school meals. We strongly encourage you to check if you're eligible under the new criteria. See below for more information on how to check if your child qualifies.

Why register for free school meals?

Pupils who are registered for free school meals will get healthy, nutritious and balanced food at school that helps make sure they're ready to learn and thrive at school.

Registering your child for free school meals is also important because **the school might get extra 'pupil premium' funding from the government as a result** – for each eligible pupil, the school will get an extra **£1,100** in pupil premium funding in 2026/27.

If you prefer your child to have packed lunches, don't worry – they can still have this if they're registered for free school meals.

Is my child eligible for free school meals and the pupil premium?

From September 2026, there will be 2 categories of free school meals:

Targeted FSM – your child may be eligible if you receive:

- Universal Credit **and** have an annual household income of **£7,400 or less**
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit

Your child might also qualify if you have no recourse to public funds (NRPF).

A member of Swale Academies Trust

Registered Office: Ashdown House, Johnson Road, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 1JS

Registered in England No. 07344732



Headteacher: Mr G Prebble BEd (Hons) NPQH



Pupils receiving targeted FSM:

- Can receive free school meals
- Will attract pupil premium funding for the school
- May be eligible for other support, such as the Holiday Activities and Food programme: [Holiday Activities and Food Programme \(HAF\) - Kent County Council](#)

Expanded FSM – your child is eligible if you receive:

- Universal Credit **and** have an annual household income of **over £7,400**

Pupils receiving expanded FSM:

- Can receive free school meals
- Will not attract pupil premium funding for the school, nor be eligible for other support that's based on targeted FSM

How do I register?

Register your child for free school meals at: [Free school meals - Kent County Council](#)

You can also email: freeschoolmeals@kent.gov.uk

For information on registering for free school meals if you are a household with no recourse to public funds (NRPF), see the FAQs on the following pages.

More information

If you have any questions or concerns, please email: ths_office@swale.at

You can also find more information at www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals.

Best wishes,

Mr L Downey
Deputy Headteacher



Free school meals and the pupil premium: FAQs

Pupil premium FAQs

What is pupil premium funding?

Pupil premium is additional funding for schools for pupils who:

- Are registered for targeted free school meals (FSM)
- Have been registered for FSM at any point in the past 6 years
- Are, or have been, in care
- Have parents in the armed forces

How much pupil premium funding does the school receive?

At The Holmesdale School we get an **extra £1,100** in 2026/27 for every eligible pupil who is registered for targeted free school meals. This extra money makes a real difference to the quality of education we can offer.

Free school meals (FSM) FAQs

How does it work in practice?

A credit for free school meals will be added to your child's account. This can only be used for a meal deal at lunchtime.

Will the fact my child is registered for FSM be made public?

We keep this information as confidential as possible. We do not publish identifying details of children registered for FSM.

My household has no recourse to public funds (NRPF). Is my child eligible for free school meals?

Children of households with NRPF may be eligible, this includes:

- Zambrano and Chen carers (non-EEA nationals caring for a British citizen residing in the UK)
- British National (Overseas) passport holders
- Spousal visa, work visa, or student visa holders
- Those with no immigration status
- Families who have NRPF right to remain in the UK under Article 8 of the European Convention of Human Rights

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- Families receiving support under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 who are subject to a NRPF restriction
- Certain failed asylum seekers supported under Section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

The maximum income thresholds for families with NRPF who can work are:

For schools outside London:

- £22,700 for families outside London with 1 child
- £26,300 for families outside London with 2 or more children

Families must also have no more than £16,000 in capital and savings.

NRPF: How to register for free school meals

The process for registering for free school meals is different as we have to check your eligibility in a different way.

Please check with The Holmesdale School directly if your household has no recourse to public funds (NRFP)

[Providing free school meals to families with no recourse to public funds \(NRPF\) - GOV.UK](#)

My child already has free school meals: are they still eligible?

From September 2026, **all pupils** will need to meet the eligibility criteria, set out in the letter above, to receive free school meals. This includes pupils who already have free school meals.

Even if your child has already been registered for free school meals, you may **need to apply again** this year.

To check if your child is already registered for free school meals, please contact the school office at ths_office@swale.at

My child is aged 16-18: are they still eligible?

They might be eligible if you qualify for 1 of the benefits listed in the 'is my child eligible for free school meals and the pupil premium?' section of our letter.