



Dear Parent/Carer

At Hazelwick School, we want to ensure that every student receives the best possible education and support. Healthy, nutritious school meals have proven health benefits, help students establish positive habits for life and can improve concentration, wellbeing and readiness to learn. Families receiving certain benefits may be eligible for **Free School Meals (FSM)**.

Is my child eligible?

New government guidance

From the start of the 2026/27 academic year, transitional protections for free school meals will end, therefore households must meet the FSM eligibility criteria from the start of the 2026 to 2027 academic year to continue receiving provision.

Going forward, there will be 2 categories of benefits-based free school meals:

Targeted FSM: for families receiving Universal Credit with household earnings below £7,400 per year. These pupils will receive a free school meal and are eligible for the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme. Children in Years 7 to 11 within this category will also receive Pupil Premium funding.

Expanded FSM: for families receiving Universal Credit with earnings above £7,400 per year. These pupils will be entitled to free meals only.

Some families with **No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)** may also be eligible for Free School Meals, subject to meeting specific immigration and household income criteria. Further information is available through West Sussex County Council.

What this means for you

If your child currently receives Free School Meals, their eligibility will be re-checked before the new school year. If West Sussex County Council (WSCC) do not hold the relevant information you may be asked to provide updated information to confirm whether your child qualifies. As re-checks are processed, if you have previously applied and WSCC hold an up-to-date email address, you will receive an email notifying you of updated eligibilities.

Households that no longer meet the criteria will not automatically continue to receive Free School Meals, as previous transitional protections in place since April 2018 will end when the current school term finishes.

Next steps

If you have previously applied for Free School Meals via the [WSCC website](https://www.wsccl.gov.uk) and your details remain the same, you do not need to do anything else at the moment.

Please note, once your child has their updated status this will last for a full school year. The status will only be changed if a re-check is requested by a parent/carer or school.

If your child currently receives FSM, and after re-checking is not entitled to free meals from September, please ensure you have made arrangements for lunches upon their return in September.

How do I apply?

If you think your child may be eligible, please complete an application online via West Sussex County Council:

[Free School Meals – West Sussex County Council](#)

Please note that all Free School Meals applications are dealt with by West Sussex County Council, therefore **should you have any questions or would like further information, please contact them directly using the link above.**

Finally, please be reassured that Hazelwick School's **biometric catering system** ensures that, at the point of purchase, there is **no distinction whatsoever** between students receiving Free School Meals and those purchasing meals in the usual way.

Yours faithfully

Mr A Cahill
Assistant Headteacher