



Pupil Premium & Free School Meals

A simple guide for parents and carers • 2026–2027

WHAT HAS CHANGED?

From September 2026, every child living in a household receiving Universal Credit can receive a free school meal. However, not every child receiving a free school meal will attract Pupil Premium funding for their school.

There are now two types of Free School Meals

Type	What it means for your child
Targeted FSM	Your household receives Universal Credit and annual household earnings are £7,400 or less (after tax and excluding benefits). Your child receives a free meal and the school may receive Pupil Premium funding.
Expanded FSM	Your household receives Universal Credit but annual household earnings are above £7,400. Your child receives a free meal, but this entitlement does not itself attract Pupil Premium funding.

Why should I still apply if my child is in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2?

Children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 already receive Universal Infant Free School Meals. However, if your family meets the criteria for Targeted FSM, registering your child can help the school receive additional Pupil Premium funding. This funding can be used to support children's learning, wellbeing and access to opportunities.

PLEASE REGISTER

If you think your family may be eligible, please complete the FSM eligibility check even if your child already receives a free school meal through the infant entitlement.



What can Pupil Premium help with?

- Additional reading, writing and mathematics support.
- Small-group or individual interventions.
- Language and communication support.
- Pastoral and wellbeing support.
- Attendance support.
- Clubs, enrichment and educational opportunities where these remove a barrier to participation.
- Resources or practical support where there is a clear educational need.

Does receiving Expanded FSM mean my child is Pupil Premium?

No. From September 2026, a child can receive a free school meal through Expanded FSM without attracting Pupil Premium. Pupil Premium is linked to Targeted FSM and other qualifying groups.

What if my family circumstances change?

FSM eligibility is now checked under the current rules. Transitional protections that previously allowed some children to retain FSM after household circumstances changed ended at the end of the 2025–2026 academic year.

If you are unsure whether your child qualifies, please contact the school office. The school can explain how to complete the eligibility check and can signpost you to the relevant Essex process.

Universal Infant Free School Meals

All children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 at state-funded schools are entitled to a free school meal. This is separate from benefits-based FSM and does not automatically mean that a child attracts Pupil Premium.

Questions?

Rayleigh Primary School
Love Lane, Rayleigh, Essex, SS6 7DD
Telephone: 01268 775712
Email: schooloffice@rayleighprimary.org.uk

For the national FSM application guidance, visit: [GOV.UK – Apply for free school meals](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-free-school-meals)

Information correct for the 2026–2027 academic year and based on DfE Free School Meals guidance updated September 2026.