



Hebburn Comprehensive School

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DRT/JE

Head Teacher: Mr D R Thompson

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📢 Important Update: Changes to Free School Meals from September 2026

We want to make families aware of some important changes made by The Department for Education to Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility that will come into effect from September 2026.

✅ What's changing?

The Government is expanding Free School Meals so that **all children in households receiving Universal Credit will be eligible for a free school meal**, regardless of household income. This means that many more families may qualify for support from September 2026.

There will now be two categories of eligibility:

- ◆ **Targeted FSM** – children who meet the existing benefits-related FSM criteria, including the current earnings threshold. These children will continue to be eligible for HAF.
- ◆ **Expanded FSM** – children in households receiving Universal Credit who qualify for free school meals under the wider September 2026 changes, but who do not meet the free Targeted FSM criteria. These children will not be eligible for HAF-funded places.

⚠️ What does this mean for families already receiving Free School Meals?

- The current transitional protection arrangements will end in August 2026. This means that all existing Free School Meal claims will need to be checked again to ensure eligibility under the new rules.
- From September 2026, if your household receives Universal Credit, you will qualify but you still need to apply.
- Be aware moving forward annual eligibility checks will occur and your eligibility year on year may change.

📋 What do you need to do?

- If your child currently receives Free School Meals, **you must** reapply or this **will stop** from September 2026.
- If you think your child is eligible for Free School Meals, it's important that you apply.

Please click here to complete the required form - [online form](#) as soon as possible. If you have any questions, please contact the school via email office@hebburn.net and we will be happy to help.

Kind regards,

Mr D R Thompson
Head Teacher