

Free School Meals for families in receipt of Universal Credit

Further to our previous communications explaining the changes to Free School Meals from 1 September, any families who are in receipt of Universal Credit are urged to apply by following the link on this page:

<https://life.southglos.gov.uk/kb5/southglos/directory/advice.page?id=yp4evwg7Duw#free>

Here is a reminder of eligibility criteria:

Free school meals

There are 3 ways your child can get free school meals:

1. Targeted Free School Meals

Who gets it?

Children whose families receive Universal Credit with annual household earnings of £7,400 or less and certain benefits. If eligible, your child will receive free school meals throughout their school and further education up to age 19, extra school funding and access to our Holiday Activities and Food programme. You need to apply and eligibility will be checked regularly.

2. Expanded Free School Meals (NEW from September 2026)

Who gets it?

From September 2026, children in households receiving Universal Credit, with annual household earnings exceeding £7,400 and some other qualifying benefits will be entitled to free school meals throughout their school and further education up to age 19. You need to apply, and annual eligibility checks will be made.

3. Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM)

Who gets it?

All children in Reception, Year 1 and 2. Every child gets a free meal automatically. Families receiving Universal Credit with children in reception, year 1 and year 2 should still apply for benefits-based free school meals because, if eligible, you could qualify for extra funding to support your child's education (Pupil Premium) and funded places on our Holiday Activities and Food programme.

Children who get paid these benefits directly, instead of through a parent or guardian, can also get free school meals.

WHY APPLY?

Even if your child gets meals in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2: You could unlock extra support for your child, Schools receive extra funding and you may get help during school holidays