



05 June 2026

## Free School Meal Eligibility – September 2026

Dear Parent/Carer,

### Could your child be entitled to free school meals from September 2026?

We are writing to inform you of an important national change to free school meals, which will take effect from **September 2026**.

From this date, eligibility is being extended, meaning that more families may now qualify, particularly those in receipt of Universal Credit.

We strongly encourage all parents and carers to check their eligibility, even if you are unsure. Applying is quick, confidential, and could provide valuable support for your child.

### Why it is worth applying

- Your child could receive a free, nutritious meal at school each day
- It may help reduce your weekly household costs
- It ensures your child has access to support available through the school

If your child is eligible, they can continue to use our normal cashless catering system, and there is no difference in how meals are provided.

### Who should apply

Please consider applying if any of the following apply to your family:

- You receive **Universal Credit**
- You receive another qualifying benefit
- Your child previously received free school meals, but you are unsure if they still qualify from September 2026
- Your household circumstances have recently changed

You do not need to work out eligibility yourself — once you apply, this will be checked for you.

### Confidential and straightforward process

We understand that families may have questions or concerns. Please be reassured:

- Applications are handled confidentially and sensitively. Information shared as part of free school meal application is handled carefully and used to check eligibility
- If your child is eligible, they will use the school meal system in the usual way using our cashless catering
- Students receiving free school meals are **not identified in any way**
- Your child can still bring a packed lunch if they prefer

### How to apply

Applying only takes a few minutes:

- **Apply online:** <https://www.hodgehill.bham.sch.uk/freeschoolmeals>

- **Support:** Our School Office Team and Data Team are very happy to help you complete an application in person or over the phone

**Eligibility checks can be completed from 1 June 2026**, in preparation for the new academic year on 1 September 2026.

**Need help or unsure?**

If you are unsure whether to apply, we encourage you to do so or speak to us for advice. There is no disadvantage to applying.

You can contact us via:

- **Telephone:** 0121 783 7807
- **Email:** [enquiry@hodgehill.bham.sch.uk](mailto:enquiry@hodgehill.bham.sch.uk)

**We are here to support our families**

Ensuring that every student is well supported is a priority for us. Applying for free school meals is an important way to access that support where eligible.

Thank you for taking the time to check whether your child may qualify.

Yours faithfully,



Hannah Herrmann  
**Headteacher**