Ealing Council
Perceval House
14-16 Uxbridge Road
London W5 2HL

Date 16th October 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

Important changes to free school meals: Don't miss out, apply today.

From September 2026, the government has changed the rules for benefits-related free school meals. All children in households **receiving Universal Credit** are now entitled to a free school meal, regardless of household earnings.

The new categories

Targeted FSM: households receiving Universal Credit with annual earnings of £7,400 or less. This includes free school meals and can include additional support such as Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF)and pupil premium funding for your child's school.
Expanded FSM: households receiving Universal Credit with annual earnings above £7,400. Children in this category are entitled to free school meals.

This means more Ealing children will be eligible.

If your family receives Universal Credit and your child is not currently registered to receive free school meals, we strongly encourage you to submit an application.

Even if your child already receives a free meal at primary school through one of the universal meal programmes, it is still important to register.

Registering helps make sure your child receives all the support they are entitled to and can also bring additionally funding into their school. At a time when school budgets are under increasing pressure, every registration matters and may also give your family access to additional support, such as the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme.

What you need to do

If your child is not currently registered for free school meals and your household receives Universal Credit, submit an application on;
www.ealing.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals

Or contact your school who will submit a application on your behalf.

If your child is already registered for free school meals, you **do not need to reapply.**

Why registering is important

- Ensure your child can receive the free school meal they are entitled to. It is important for eligible primary-aged children to be registered even where they already receive a free meal through a universal scheme, so that their school receives the appropriate funding.
- Increase funding to your child's school, so they can support children, including pupil premium funding

Get additional support for your family such as the Holiday Activities and Food programme; **www.ealingfamiliesdirectory.org.uk/haf-home**

Find out more and apply

If you are unsure whether you should apply, please contact your child's school or Ealing Council Pupil Support team.
pupilsupport@ealing.gov.uk

Thank you for taking the time to check your eligibility. Registering helps make sure children receive the support they are entitled to and helps schools receive the funding linked to eligible pupils.

Yours sincerely



Tamara Quinn
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