



Haygrove School
Durleigh Road, Bridgwater, Somerset TA6 7HW
Tel: 01278 455531
www.haygroveschool.co.uk

Headteacher – Mr A Reid, BSc (Hons), MA



Friday 26th June 2026

Dear Parent/Carer,

Changes to Free School Meal Eligibility and Annual Checks

We are writing to inform you about important changes to Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility that will come into effect from September 2026.

From the start of the 2026–2027 academic year:

- All children in households receiving Universal Credit will be entitled to free school meals, regardless of household earnings.
- Schools will be required to verify eligibility each academic year, and free school meal entitlement will no longer be carried forward automatically from year to year.

As a result, all families receiving Free School Meals will need to ensure their eligibility is checked and confirmed for the new academic year.

Why it is important to register

Registering for Free School Meals can provide support beyond the cost of school lunches. Depending on your circumstances, eligibility may also help the school access additional funding, including Pupil Premium and other disadvantage-related funding, which supports teaching, learning resources, pastoral care and wider opportunities for pupils.

We encourage all families who think they may be eligible to apply, even if:

- your child currently brings a packed lunch
- your child has not previously received school meals
- you have applied before and were not eligible
- your circumstances have changed recently

Please note that while all children in households receiving Universal Credit will qualify for free meals from September 2026, eligibility for Pupil Premium and other linked funding will continue to be based on specific qualifying criteria.

Targeted FSM

Children from households receiving Universal Credit with annual household earnings of £7,400 or less (the previous FSM threshold) will be eligible for Targeted FSM. In addition to free school meals, these pupils will attract Pupil Premium and other disadvantage funding for the school.



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Expanded FSM

Children from households

receiving Universal Credit with annual household earnings above £7,400 will be entitled to Expanded FSM, which provides free school meals but may not attract Pupil Premium funding.

Who is eligible?

A pupil may be eligible for free school meals if they, or their parent/carer, receive one or more of the following:

- Universal Credit
- Income Support (IS)
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit (provided the family is not entitled to Working Tax Credit and annual taxable income is less than £16,190)

A pupil is only entitled to receive free school meals where:

- a claim has been made; and
- eligibility has been verified by the school or local authority.

Families with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)

Some families who do not receive the benefits listed above may still qualify for free school meals if they meet the criteria set out in the government's guidance for families with No Recourse to Public Funds.

Children may qualify where household income and immigration circumstances meet the relevant requirements, including some families who:

- have a right to remain in the UK under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights
- receive support under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 and are subject to an NRPF condition
- are supported under Section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- are Zambrano or Chen carers
- hold a British National (Overseas) passport
- hold a spousal, work or student visa
- have no current immigration status

Annual Eligibility Check

To enable us to complete the required eligibility check for your child(ren), please complete and return the attached form as soon as possible.

Please be aware that free school meal entitlement cannot continue from September 2026 unless eligibility has been successfully verified.





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New Applications

If you believe your child may now be entitled to free school meals but you have not previously applied, please submit an application through Somerset Council using the link below:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/children-families-and-education/school-life/free-school-meals/>

Please do not return the eligibility form to the school until your application has been processed and you have been notified that you qualify for Free School Meals.

Support with Your Application

Applying is quick and confidential. If you need support with the application process, please contact the school office.

We understand that discussing finances can sometimes feel difficult and would like to reassure you that all enquiries and applications will be treated sensitively and in confidence.

Yours sincerely,

Sally Haysham

Operations Manager



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