

01922
626926

enquiries@yewtree.sandwell.sch.uk



www.yewtreeprimary.co.uk



@YewTreeSandwell



Dear Parents/Carers,

Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility

We know that feeding growing children can be expensive which is one of the reasons we are keen to promote Free School Meals for our families. If you think you meet the eligibility criteria outlined below then please ensure you have registered for Free School Meals with the local authority which you live in. Do get in touch with our school office if you need any help registering your child.

What are the eligibility criteria?

From September 2026, the Department for Education will introduce new eligibility criteria meaning that all children from households in receipt of Universal Credit (regardless of earnings) will qualify for FSM.

Free school meals are available to pupils in receipt of, or whose parents are in receipt of, one or more of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit
- support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

A pupil is only eligible to receive a free school meal where both:

- a claim for this support has been made
- their eligibility has been verified by the school where they are enrolled or by the local authority

Households may also be entitled to a meal if they:

- are in receipt of income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- receive the guarantee element of Pension Credit
- meet criteria set out in separate guidance for [families with no recourse to public funds](#)

Targeted FSM

Children from households in receipt of Universal Credit with annual household earnings of £7,400 or less (the existing threshold for FSM prior to the expansion), will be eligible for “targeted” FSM. In addition to receiving free meals, pupils eligible for targeted FSM will attract Pupil Premium and other disadvantage funding for their schools.

Pupil Premium and other disadvantage funding is currently allocated in respect of pupils who are recorded in school census returns as eligible for FSM or have been recorded as eligible for FSM in the past 6 years (referred to as Ever 6 FSM). From the start of the 2026 to 2027 academic year, Ever 6 FSM will be based on targeted FSM.

Other education entitlements that have previously been linked to eligibility for FSM, such as the Holiday Activities and Food programme (HAF) and the ‘extended rights’ element of school travel assistance, will also continue to be based on targeted FSM.

Households qualifying for free meals because they are in receipt of support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 will also be eligible for targeted FSM.

Households in receipt of Income-related Employment and Support Allowance or the guarantee element of Pension Credit or households with [families with no recourse to public funds](#) (NRPF) may also be eligible for targeted FSM.

Expanded FSM

Children from households in receipt of Universal Credit, with annual household earnings exceeding £7,400 will be entitled to expanded FSM (meals only).

Checking Claims

The Department for Education will introduce a requirement for FSM claims to be checked annually from September 2026.

Any child who currently has a protected free school meals claim, will be reassessed using the Inland Revenue Checking Service at the end of the current 2025/26 academic year in July to see if they still qualify for a free meal. If any child after being reassessed no longer qualifies under the new eligibility criteria, parents/carers will be informed, along with their child's school, to confirm this and parent's will now have to pay for their child's meal from September 2026.

This means those already receiving FSM **DO NOT** need to do anything.

I don't currently claim free school meals – what does this mean for me?

If you think you might be eligible for free school meals, speak to a member of the school office team or complete an application form directly with the local authority which you live in. For Sandwell residents, this is available at www.sandwell.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals.

The information you provide will be used to check if you are in receipt of a qualifying benefit and, depending on your circumstances, whether your child is eligible for Targeted FSM or Expanded FSM.

If you are eligible, we will be notified. Your child will receive free school meals and the school will receive extra funding called Pupil Premium for those who are on the “targeted” FSM list.

Where can I get more information?

If you need any further information, please speak to a member of school staff or the local authority. You can also visit the read information directly from the Department for Education by clicking [HERE](#).

My child is in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2 and has free meals anyway – do I still need to register?

Children in YR, Y1 or Y2 are automatically entitled to a free meal under the Government's Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) scheme. However, we would encourage families to register their details with the local authority regardless as this could result in the school receiving additional funding (i.e. for those pupils who are eligible for “targeted” FSM).

Did you know ... just registering your child for Free School Meals could mean that the school gets extra money?

This means we can provide extra support to help your child at school!

The Government offers schools funding called Pupil Premium, for children that are eligible for targeted FSM, so that they can provide resources and support to ensure all children achieve equally as well regardless of their family income.

For every eligible child registered, Yew Tree Primary gets £1,550

This funding helps children access support and activities that enrich their lives and help them to thrive academically, socially and emotionally. This is why it is so important that we receive this funding to continue offering these wonderful resources for all children at Yew Tree Primary School.

If your child is eligible for free school meals but still wants to bring a packed lunch, please do still register as the school will still receive additional funding regardless of whether your child actually has school meals.

Pupil Premium money can support the school in various ways including:

AFTERSCHOOL CLUBS & MUSIC TUITION – helping subsidise the cost so that all can attend both clubs and instrumental tuition

RESIDENTIALS & SCHOOL TRIPS – reducing the actual cost to families to make it accessible to all

EXTRA SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN - targeted Maths and English intervention including tutoring opportunities.

EXTRA SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN – for improved self-esteem and self confidence

EXTRA SUPPORT FOR PARENTS/CARERS

CHILDREN IN RECEPTION, YEAR 1 OR YEAR 2 RECEIVE A FREE SCHOOL MEAL REGARDLESS OF INCOME BUT WE NEED YOU TO REGISTER TO RECEIVE THIS FUNDING