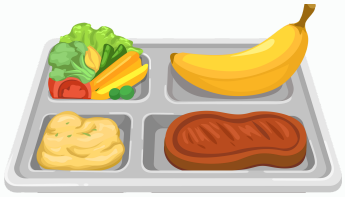
Changes to Free School Meals Eligibility

From September 2026 the eligibility for free school meals (FSM) has changed. Children from households in receipt of Universal Credit will be entitled to receive FSM. Check your child's FSM eligibility and additional benefits below.

Questions about FSM? Contact your child's school



	Targeted free school meals (T-FSM)	Expanded free school meals (E-FSM)	Universal Infant free school meals (UIFSM)
Benefits-based	✓	✓	✗
Eligibility Check for Pupils	In households in receipt of Universal Credit, with **annual household earnings of £7,400 or less.**	In households in receipt of Universal Credit, with **annual household earnings over £7,400.**	No eligibility checks are required for UIFSM *
The child will get Free Meals at School	✓	✓	✓
Registration required on Local Authority website	✓	✓	✗ **
Other benefits or entitlements for the child	Herts Card and HAPpy: Holiday Activity Programme	Herts Card	Must register for T-FSM or E-FSM to receive benefits **
Pupil Premium Funding for the child's school ££	✓	✗	✗

* All pupils in reception, year 1 and year 2, in state-funded schools, regardless of household earnings, are entitled to UIFSM.

** If the household is in receipt of Universal Credit, then eligibility should be checked for T-FSM or E-FSM and a registration made.

Other households may also be entitled to FSM (if receiving income-related Employment and Support Allowance, the guaranteed element of Pension Credit, or families with no recourse to public funds). If this applies to you, please contact your child's school office for advice.

HAPpy: Holiday Activity programme

To access the HAPpy holiday programmes, children must now meet the new **Targeted FSM threshold**.

The FSM eligibility change means some children who previously accessed the HAPpy: Holiday Activity Programme will no longer be eligible to attend after Sept 2026.

Visit HAPpy

Herts Card

This card gives discounts to children from low income families for lots of activities and days out that they might not be able to access otherwise.

Visit Herts Card

Need Help to Manage the Cost of Living?

For help and advice please visit the Help to manage the cost of living page on the Hertfordshire County Council website.

Visit Cost of Living