THE BARLOW
RC HIGH SCHOOL
SERVE · PRAY · ACHIEVE · RESPECT

Rise up,
take courage,
and do it.

The Barlow RC High School
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Ref: FSM/NCO
8TH July 2026

Dear parent/carer

YOUR CHILD MAY NOW BE ENTITLED TO FREE SCHOOL MEALS

CHANGES TO FREE SCHOOL MEALS GUIDANCE FROM SEPTEMBER 2026

From September 2026, **all pupils in households receiving Universal Credit are eligible for free school meals**. Your household income doesn't matter – as long as you receive Universal Credit, your child can claim free school meals. We strongly encourage you to check if you're eligible under the new criteria. See below for more information on how to check if your child qualifies.

FREE SCHOOL MEALS EXPANSION

From September 2026, free school meals eligibility will be distinguished between pupils eligible under the previous income-related criteria ("Targeted FSM") and pupils who become eligible under the September 2026 expansion ("Expanded FSM") for certain funding and support programmes.

- **Eligible 'Targeted'**: this covers children in households in receipt of Universal Credit with annual household earnings of £7,400 or less.
  Children eligible under the 'Targeted' category will benefit from Holiday Activities and Food provision (HAF). Children may also be eligible for Targeted Free School Meal's if their household is in receipt of one of the below benefits:

  - Income Support.
  - Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance.
  - Income-related Employment and Support Allowance.
  - The guarantee element of Pension Credit.
  - Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190).
  - Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit.
  - No Recourse to Public Funds.
  - Your child may also qualify if you are an asylum seeker, or if they receive any of these benefits directly, instead of through a parent or guardian.

- **Eligible 'Expanded':** this covers children who are in households receiving Universal Credit with annual household earnings exceeding £7,400.

  Under current arrangements, pupils eligible solely through the FSM expansion are not expected to attract Pupil Premium funding or have access to the Holiday Activities and Food provision (HAF).

TRANSITIONAL PROTECTION HAS ENDED

- If your child is entering into Year 7 in September, transitional protection is ending, families will be required to complete a new eligibility check before September 2026.
- If your child has previously been in receipt of benefits-based Free School Meals, you may need to re-apply before September 2026, if you haven't had a notification of your application being reviewed for September. Your child may not automatically continue to receive Free School Meals from September 2026 unless you recheck your eligibility.

WHY REGISTER FOR FREE SCHOOL MEALS?

Pupils receiving 'Targeted' FSM:

- Can receive free school meals.
- Will attract pupil premium funding for the school.
- May be eligible for other support, such as the Holiday Activities and Food programme: https://www.manchester.gov.uk/people-and-communities/help-with-the-cost-of-living-crisis/stay-connected-and-informed/school-holidays

Pupils receiving 'Expanded' FSM:

- Can receive free school meals.
- Are not expected to attract pupil premium funding for the school or be eligible for other support that is based on targeted FSM.

HOW DO I REGISTER?

- Complete an online application by Monday 13th July: https://www.manchester.gov.uk/benefits-and-support/education-benefits/free-school-meals
- If you are unable to complete an online application, please complete the attached form and return it to the school office by Monday 13th July.
- If you are a household with no recourse to public funds (NRPF), please get in touch with school for support.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Nic Cooke, Finance & HR Manager on 0161 445 8053 ext:106.

You can also find more information at www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals.

Yours sincerely

Nic Cooke
Finance & HR Manager

Free School Meal Application Details

Child's details

Surname of child	
First name(s) of child	
Date of birth of child (dd/mm/yy)	

Parent/carer's details

Surname of parent/carer	
First name(s) of parent/carer	
Relationship to child	
National Insurance Number	
Date of Birth	
Address	
Email Address	
Mobile number	

I (Name) .....

of (Address) ....

confirm that the information I have provided above is accurate and true.

I agree that the information I have provided can be shared with the Manchester City Councils Free School Meal Application Service.