

June 2026

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Free school meals are being expanded from September

This is a general letter and action may be required. Anyone who must act, has been contacted separately.

How do you know if your family is eligible and how to apply?

From September 2026 the Department for Education is extending entitlement to free school meals (FSM) to include all children from households in receipt of Universal Credit. Although eligibility will be granted to all Universal Credit recipients, it is important to note that families do still need to apply to receive the meals.

York High School uses North Yorkshire Council to provide the checking service for this provision. If your child is currently registered as being in receipt of free school meals and we have not sent you a separate letter, then you DO NOT need to reapply, as your child's eligibility to continue receiving this provision will be automatically reassessed before September 2026.

Previous protections are ending

For a number of years now, protections have been in place meaning that once you became eligible for FSM, you retained this eligibility even if your circumstances changed. Please be aware that these previous protections, which applied to children already in receipt of free school meals, will no longer apply in September. Eligibility will be based on whether you are in receipt of any of the benefits, as shown below:

- Universal Credit
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The Guarantee element of Pension Credit

What else is changing?

From September 2026 there will be 2 categories of eligibility for free school meals:

Targeted FSM: this covers children in households in receipt of Universal Credit with annual household earnings of £7,400 or less. These children will attract pupil premium and other disadvantage funding for their schools. Other education entitlements, such as the holiday activities and food programme (HAF) and the 'extended rights' element of school travel assistance, will be based on targeted free school meals.

Expanded FSM: this covers children who are in households receiving Universal Credit with annual household earnings exceeding £7,400. Children will be entitled to free school meals only.

For those wanting to apply, applications can be made through the North Yorkshire Council website www.northyorks.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals with immediate effect. Please do not wait until September to do this. **If you decide to apply, the system automatically has the local authority as North Yorkshire, please change this to York.**

If your application is successful, your entitlement will be added to the school's database.

If your application is unsuccessful, North Yorkshire Council will inform us and we will endeavour to let you know as quickly as possible.

If you have any further questions regarding this information, please email school on reception@yorkhigh.elt.org.uk and add FSM in the subject heading.

Yours faithfully,

Gavin Kumar

Principal