

---

**This service is available for Academies, Other schools and settings and Maintained schools****Description:**

Eligibility checking for free school meals.

Universal Credit (UC) is a benefit for people of working age on a low income or not working, administered by the Department for Work and Pensions.

Parents earning under the threshold amount or not working and receiving UC are eligible for benefit-related FSM.

**Year** Financial year 2025/26

**Benefits**

- The council has a dedicated pupil support team and an online database system for verifying eligibility for benefit-related free school meals.
- This system is directly integrated with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) databases, ensuring that eligibility status is updated weekly. This allows for real-time recognition of any changes in household circumstances.
- Schools are able to access pupil information regarding free school meal eligibility and can apply on behalf of parents.
- This service provides schools with an efficient and accurate method for assessing eligibility, which is directly linked to pupil premium allocations.

**Office hours:**

Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

**Service directors:**

Tamara Quinn

**More detailed information:**

Universal Credit is a benefit for people of working age on a low income. It's a single monthly payment which will replace the following benefits with a few exceptions:

- Child Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Working Tax Credit

**Eligibility**

Parents earning under the threshold amount of £7,400 per household or not working and receiving [Universal Credit](#) are eligible for benefit-related FSM.

Parents earning above the threshold amount and receiving Universal Credit will not be eligible for benefit-related FSM..

**Protected pupils**

Existing recipients of FSM do not lose entitlement and will be protected until **31 March 2025**.

- Any pupil gaining eligibility for FSM during the rollout of Universal Credit will keep their eligibility until 31 March 2025
- After 31 March 2025 any pupil losing eligibility will continue to be transitionally protected until the end of their current phase of education, example primary/secondary
- Schools should flag pupils as "protected pupils" in their management information systems as this will be needed for school data collections.

All protected pupils will be identified on schools' free school meals list. Transitional protection FSM is pupil based and not family based, and you may have cases of one sibling entitled to transitional protected FSM and the other not.

**Related content:**

[Catering and food](#)

**Provider:**

Pupil support, children and adults' services.

**Contact:**

- **Lynda Daly**, Pupil support services: [ldaly@ealing.gov.uk](mailto:ldaly@ealing.gov.uk) 020 8825 6477

**Additional contact information**

Service number: 020 8825 5566

**Further details:**

You are currently not logged in. [Login here](#) for further details.

**Was this page useful?**

- [Yes](#)
- [Neutral](#)
- [No](#)

Last updated: 17 Feb 2025

---