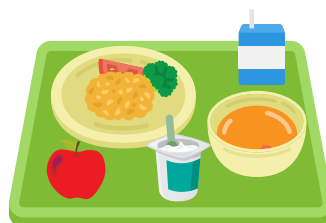


FREE SCHOOL MEALS UPDATE



London Borough of

Redbridge



IMPORTANT CHANGES FOR FAMILIES

From the start of the 2026 to 2027 academic year, Free School Meal eligibility is expanding to all children from households in receipt of Universal Credit regardless of household earnings.

All children in reception or Years 1 or 2 are entitled to universal free school meals.

From September 2026, children attending a full-time state-funded nursery class, as well as children in Year 3 and above, will be eligible for free school meals if they live in a household receiving Universal Credit.

All children in receipt of free school meals will now be rechecked annually. You may be required to provide further information to your school on request.



To Qualify

To qualify for free school meals, you must get one of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit
- Asylum seeker support (Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999)

Households may also be entitled to a meal if they:

- are in receipt of New Style Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- receive the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- meet criteria set out in separate guidance for families with No Recourse to Public Funds

Children aged between 16 and 18 who are getting Universal Credit in their own name can also get free school meals.

If your child is in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2, you should still let the school know if you get any of the qualifying benefits, as the school can get extra funding called pupil premium.

This supports the education of your child.



How to apply

Contact your school, where you will be asked for the following information:

- Your National Insurance number
- Your surname
- Your date of birth
- Asylum seekers documentation (if applicable)

Your school will then check eligibility.

What happens next



Once checked your school will confirm if you are eligible and when your child's free school meals will start.

Other help you can get

- your child may be able to get help with travel costs
- you may be able to get support with a Council Tax Reduction
- cost of living advice



FIND OUT MORE

For more information on who can get free school meals see GOV.UK visit www.redbridge.gov.uk search Free School Meals or scan the QR code

