



25 June 2026

Dear Parent/Carer,

You may be aware that as of September 2026, there will be important national changes to free school meal (FSM) eligibility.

Who is eligible?

From September 2026, eligibility for free school meals is available to **all children from households in receipt of Universal Credit.**

Households may also be entitled to free school meals, if they:

- are in receipt of income-related employment and support allowance
- receive the guaranteed element of pension credit
- meet **eligible group** criteria set out in separate guidance issued by the Department for Education for those with no access to public funds: [Providing free school meals to families with no recourse to public funds \(NRPF\) - GOV.UK.](#)

What do I need to do?

- Confirm eligibility using our eligibility checking service link below, households are encouraged to apply even if they have applied previously and were not eligible.
- If your child currently receives Free School Meals, it is essential that you re-apply to ensure your child is still eligible and will continue to receive free school meals from September 2026.

How can you check your eligibility?

Eligibility checks can be made using the link below and should only take a few minutes, please note that you will need to complete a check for each child you have at our school.

<https://fsm.lgfl.net>

Instructions:

- **check that the local authority and school are as expected (then confirm by ticking the box at the bottom of the webpage, then click save and continue)**

1 School Details 2 Parent Details 3 Child Details 4 Check & Submit

Important Information: Please complete this form to check if your child is eligible for Free School Meals. Once you have submitted, eligibility will be securely checked against government records. The result will appear on screen immediately and will also be sent to your email address. If your child's school already uses the LGFL FSM Checker, they will automatically receive the application.

Select School

Local Authority: County Durham * required

School: Hermitage Academy * required

Hermitage Academy
Phase of Education: Secondary
Full Address: Waldridge Lane, County Durham, DH2 3AD

☒ I confirm that the school selected above is correct and that I agree to the [privacy notice](#).

Save & Continue

- **enter the requested information, you will need your National Insurance number to hand (then click save and continue)**
- **enter your child's basic details (save and continue)**
- and, finally, **check and submit** – you will be given an instant decision.



To ensure free school meals are provided from September, checks should be completed by **Friday 10th July.**

Further information:

The Trust uses a secure online eligibility checking service to verify entitlement against government records. The service is provided by London Grid for Learning (LGFL), a charitable organisation that supports schools and educational settings across the UK. The information you provide will be used for the purpose of determining Free School Meal eligibility and will be handled in accordance with applicable data protection legislation, the Trust's Privacy Notice and the provider's published privacy information. The checker confirms eligibility status and does not provide schools with access to government records.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Maughan
Head of School