

FREE SCHOOL MEALS FULL INFORMATION



Could your child be entitled to Free School Meals?

At **Walderslade & Greenacre Schools Partnership**, we believe that no child should be hungry during the school day. A healthy lunch supports concentration, wellbeing and academic achievement, helping students to make the most of every lesson.

The Government has recently expanded eligibility for Free School Meals, **meaning many more families can now benefit.**

If you think your child may be eligible, we strongly encourage you to apply.

Who is eligible?

From **September 2026**, all children whose parent or carer receives **Universal Credit** are entitled to **Free School Meals**, regardless of household earnings.

Children may also qualify if their family receives certain other qualifying benefits, including:

- Universal Credit
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Certain No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) circumstances (subject to eligibility checks)

Eligibility criteria are set nationally by the Department for Education.

Why should I apply?

Receiving Free School Meals means your child can enjoy a nutritious meal each day at no cost to your family.

Applying may also unlock additional support for your child and their education.

For some eligible pupils, schools receive additional Government funding through the **Pupil Premium**, which helps provide:

- Additional academic support
- Intervention programmes
- Educational resources
- Enrichment opportunities
- Wider wellbeing support

Please note that **not every pupil eligible under the expanded Universal Credit criteria will attract Pupil Premium funding**, as separate Government rules apply for targeted funding.

Confidentiality

We understand that some families worry about stigma associated with Free School Meals.

Applications are treated confidentially, and students receiving Free School Meals are **not identified to other students**. They access their lunch in exactly the same way as everyone else.

How do I apply?

Applying is quick and straightforward.

Please complete your Local Authority's Free School Meals application via the link below or contact the WGSP office for support if you need assistance with the process.

If you are unsure whether you qualify, we encourage you to apply anyway—many families are surprised to find they are eligible under the new rules.

https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200137/schools_and_learning/354/free_school_meals

Need help?

If you would like support completing an application or would like to discuss Free School Meals confidentially, please contact the school office.

We are always happy to help families access the support they are entitled to.