



CATALYST

Quarry Hill Academy

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16th June 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

From the September 2026 academic year, Free School Meals eligibility has been extended to all children from households in receipt of **Universal Credit** regardless of household earnings. Please note, **if you already have an existing application, you do not need to reapply.**

Free school meals are available to pupils in receipt of, or whose parents are in receipt of, one or more of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit.
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

A pupil is only eligible to receive a free school meal where:

- a claim for this support has been made
- their eligibility has been verified by the local authority
- they attend a state-funded school in the Thurrock area
- if attending a state funded nursery school, they must be receiving full-time education, or if part time, must be receiving education both before and after the lunch period.

Households may also be entitled to a meal if they:

- are in receipt of income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- receive the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- have an FSM entitled child in education other than school (EOTAS). The support may form part of any EOTAS package agreed with the SEN department.

You may also be able to claim [free school meals for your child if you have 'no recourse to public funds'](#) – for example, if you cannot claim benefits.

You **do not** have to make a new application:

- If you have already applied. Once you have applied and been entitled, Thurrock will recheck your application for eligibility as necessary in line with government guidance, which is currently annually ahead of each school year.
- If your child changes their school in-year **within Thurrock**. The entitlement will move over automatically.



- If your child moves from primary to secondary school **within Thurrock**. We will undertake checks to ensure your child is still eligible and will notify your child's secondary school accordingly.

However, all **Reception, Year 1** and **Year 2** children are automatically entitled to a free school meal as part of the Government's Universal Infants Free School Meal Programme (UIFSM). The way that this is funded is changing. We are therefore requesting, that if you meet any of the requirements listed previously, you make an application via the Thurrock Portal. This is to ensure that the school receives all the funding it is entitled to, which will benefit your child.

If you are eligible to apply, and to find out more about funding, please visit the following website:

www.thurrock.gov.uk/school-meals/free-school-meals

We advise that all new FSM applications are done by the 19th July 2026, as the Thurrock Portal will be unavailable between the 20th July and 17th August 2026.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs S Wakeling
Executive Headteacher

