

FREE SCHOOL MEALS ARE CHANGING

From September 2026 there will be 3 categories of free school meals:

- Targeted
- Expanded
- Universal

Depending which category your family falls under, your children may or may not also be eligible to attend free [Healthy Holidays Calderdale](#) schemes during school holidays.

More about free school meals categories

FSM Category	Who benefits?	What children receive?
Targeted	Pupils whose families receive Universal Credit with annual household earnings of £7,400 or less	- Free school meals during term time - Free places at Healthy Holidays Calderdale schemes during the holidays - Other support e.g. uniform grants
Expanded	Pupils who do not qualify for targeted FSM, but whose families receive Universal Credit	- Free school meals during term time
Universal	All pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 regardless of family income.	- Free school meals during term time

Transitional Protection Changes

Since April 2018, around 10,000 children and young people in Calderdale have had free school meals protected under Transitional Protection. These protections will end in July 2026. From September 2026, some children may no longer qualify for free school meals, while other families may become eligible for free school meals for the first time.

<https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2025/06/expanding-free-school-meals-what-parents-need-to-know/>

Receiving free school meals does not automatically mean a child is eligible for the Healthy Holidays Calderdale Programme. Eligibility for Healthy Holidays Calderdale will remain linked to Targeted Free School Meals.



FAQ

My children are on universal FSM but my income is low, and I would like them to go to a local Healthy Holidays scheme. Are they allowed?

If your child is in Reception - Year 2, they may be receiving universal free school meals, which means that they are not eligible for Healthy Holidays Calderdale places during the school holidays. **However**, you can still apply for free school meals even if your child receives Universal free school meals. If eligible your children could then attend Healthy Holidays Calderdale schemes. Please apply here: <https://new.calderdale.gov.uk/benefits/free-school-meals>

I am on Universal Credit so can my children attend Healthy Holidays?

Healthy Holidays places are linked to the targeted FSM category only. If you are on Universal Credit and your children are in the 'expanded' category, they are not entitled to a free place.

My children have always gone to Healthy Holidays schemes but now they aren't entitled as Transitional Protection has been removed. What can I do?

For families who are not eligible, Healthy Holidays schemes offer low cost paid places for certain activities. Check here to view options: <https://eequ.org/healthyholidayscalderdale>

Play Development Services offer free, open access and inclusive play sessions. They are for children and young people aged 5 to 14 years in the communities where they live in Calderdale.

Children and young people with disabilities or special needs are very welcome. Please note: They will need to book so their specific needs can be met. Find more information here: <https://new.calderdale.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/youth-support/youth-groups/play-development-service>

Details of events and activities happening throughout Calderdale.

<https://new.calderdale.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/out-school-activities>

My children aren't on free school meals, but they have special needs. Can't you make an exception?

All providers of Healthy Holidays Calderdale are encouraged to deliver inclusive schemes. However, children attending must also be on free school meals as well as having special educational needs or a disability.

Calderdale SEND Local Offer

The Local Offer has information about what Calderdale Council expects to be available across education, health and social care for children and young people who have SEND (Specialist Educational Needs and Disabilities).

It includes information, support, services and activities for children and young people with SEND, and their parent carers.

<https://calderdalelocaloffer.org.uk/events>