



Dingle Community Primary School

Dear parents and carers,

Could your child receive free school meals from September 2026?

We are writing to let you know about an important national change to free school meals. From September 2026, more children will be able to receive a free meal at school. This is because free school meal eligibility is expanding to include children from households receiving Universal Credit.

More families may now be eligible, so we are asking parents and carers to complete an application if they think this could apply to them.

It could save your family money each week and help make sure your child can have a meal in school if they want one.

Please apply, even if your child already gets a free meal.

If your child is in Reception, Year 1, or Year 2, they already receive a free school meal through the universal infant free school meals scheme.

However, if your household receives Universal Credit or another qualifying benefit, please still apply. This is because your child may need to be recorded in a different way. Some successful applications may also help the school receive additional funding to support pupils. This depends on the eligibility category confirmed by the check.

Please complete an application if any of these apply to you.

1. Your household receives Universal Credit
2. Your household receives another qualifying benefit.
3. Your child is in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2 and already receives a free meal, but your household receives Universal Credit or another qualifying benefit.

You do not need to work out whether your child qualifies. You only need to apply. The eligibility check will do the rest.

Your child will not be treated differently.

Children and young people who receive free school meals are not treated differently in school. Information shared as part of a free school meal application is managed carefully and used to check eligibility.

If your child is eligible, they will use the school meal system in the usual way. [Insert brief detail about cashless catering, lunch cards, biometric systems, or account credit, if relevant.]

Your child can still bring a packed lunch if they prefer. Registering simply means they can have a free school meal when they want one.

"Dingle Community Primary School, where every child has a **V.O.I.C.E**"

V-be Valued for who you are, **O**-have Opportunities to grow, thrive and make a difference. **I**-feel Included with a sense of belonging. **C**-Care for and be part of our community. **E**- have high Expectations of ourself and others.

"A child who feels heard becomes a child who dares to dream"



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Email: info@dingle.dudley.sch.uk

Why applying matters

There are two types of benefits based free school meals from September 2026.

Some pupils will meet the criteria for Targeted free school meals. This means they can receive a free meal, and the school may receive additional funding to support pupils.

Other pupils will meet the criteria for Expanded free school meals. This means they can receive a free meal, but this does not automatically bring additional school funding.

You do not need to decide which category applies. The check will confirm this.

How to apply

Applying should only take a few minutes.

Apply here: <https://www.dudley.gov.uk/residents/benefits/free-school-meals/>

Please apply ASAP and no later than 30/9/26.

Paper form available from: Please come to the school office to collect.

If you would like help, please contact: info@dingle.dudley.sch.uk / 01384 283699

Eligibility checking will begin from 1 June 2026. Where a child is found to be eligible, the free meal entitlement will apply from the start of the 2026 to 2027 school year.

We can help.

If you are unsure whether to apply, please apply or contact us. We will be happy to help.

You can contact us via info@dingle.dudley.sch.uk / 01384 283699

Thank you for taking the time to check whether your child may be eligible.

Yours sincerely,

Dingle Community Primary School

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