Free School Meals (FSM) changes: What they mean for HAF

Information for Head Teachers and Business Managers

Key message: Free School Meals (FSM) eligibility has expanded, and funded HAF places continue to be reserved for children who meet the Targeted FSM criteria. This means some pupils may still receive free school meals but may no longer be eligible for a funded HAF place.

What has changed and why?

- Free School Meal eligibility has expanded nationally under new DfE requirements.
- Transitional protections have ended, meaning access to funded HAF places is now based on current Targeted FSM eligibility rather than historic entitlement.

The three types of free school meals

Targeted FSM	For families receiving qualifying benefits, including Universal Credit with annual earned income of £7,400 or less.	✓ Qualifies for funded HAF places.
Universal Infant FSM	For all children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, regardless of income.	✗ Does not automatically qualify for HAF.
Expanded FSM	A wider FSM entitlement (e.g. Universal Credit without meeting the £7,400 income threshold).	✗ Does not qualify for HAF on its own.

The HAF programme

HAF is funded by government and provides healthy food, enriching activities and opportunities to be active during school holidays.

Funded HAF places are for children eligible for Targeted FSM.

The national intention is to direct HAF funding towards families currently experiencing the greatest financial hardship.

How schools can support families

- Complete FSM checks for new pupils as they join.
- Encourage participation in HAF – HAF offers children positive holiday experiences, helping them stay active, maintain healthy routines and prepare for their return to school.
- Share information provided by the local authority and HAF providers regarding funded and paid places.

Key messages to share with families

- FSM rules have changed nationally and some children who previously had a funded HAF place may no longer be eligible.
- A child can still receive free school meals during term time but may not qualify for a funded HAF place.
- **FSM eligibility will be checked yearly, with HAF funded places available for Targeted FSM.**

How parents can apply for FSM

Parents can apply for benefits-based FSM through East Riding of Yorkshire Council:

www.eastriding.gov.uk/learning/schools-colleges-and-academies/school-meals/free-school-meals/

If they have any questions, please call **01482 394799.**

We recognise the valuable role schools play in helping families who may need additional support with the application process.

Discretionary HAF places

- A limited number of discretionary funded places are available for pupils who do not meet the core HAF eligibility criteria.
- These places are identified through local authority data and trusted organisations that work closely with families facing the greatest financial hardship and barriers to opportunities.

For further information on FSMs, refer to the government guidance:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/free-school-meals-guidance-for-schools-and-local-authorities

Find out more about HAF in East Riding at eryc.link/haf