



'Respectful and resilient; being the best that we can be.'

Timothy Hackworth Primary School



14th September, 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO COMPLETE – ALL PARENTS / CARERS TO COMPLETE PLEASE

Subject: Changes to Free School Meals from the 2026 to 2027 Academic Year

The Government has changed the way that Free School Meals entitlement is calculated.

As a result of this, we require the attached form to be completed by every parent/carer. Please complete the form, regardless of whether your child has previously taken Free School Meals, or not.

Failure to return this form may result in your child losing their Free School Meal.

Please note that only one form is required for more than one child in any one family. Please add all the children who are in your family.

Thank you.

Please see the information below from Durham County Council regarding Free School Meals entitlement.

We are writing to let you know about a change affecting your child's free school meals entitlement.

This follows updates to the national Free School Meals criteria set by the Department for Education.

Since 2018, some children have continued receiving Free School Meals even when their family's circumstances have changed and have no longer met the standard eligibility rules. This temporary protection was introduced to provide stability during wider changes to the benefits system.

The temporary protection ended nationally at the end of the 2025/26 school year.

Going forward, eligibility for Free School Meals will, instead, be based on a household's current circumstances.

What this means for your child

Our records indicate that your household does not currently meet the eligibility criteria for Free School Meals. As a result, your child will no longer receive Free School Meals.

We understand that this may be disappointing news, particularly if your child has received Free School Meals for some time, however, under the new arrangements, eligibility is assessed based on a household's current circumstances, and whether you are receiving Universal Credit.

What should you do next?

If you are receiving Universal Credit, or think your circumstances may have changed, please contact us so that we can review your entitlement.

If you think the information that we hold about your circumstances is incorrect or out of date, please let us know as soon as possible.

We know that circumstances can change over time. If your household starts receiving Universal Credit in the future, you can contact us to reapply for support. You will begin receiving Free School Meals again once we are able to confirm that you are receiving Universal Credit.

If you have any questions about this change or your child's eligibility for free school meals, please contact **Durham County Council on 03000 260000**

<https://www.durham.gov.uk/FreeSchoolMealsAreChanging> this website gives you all the relevant information.

Email address:

schoolmeals@durham.gov.uk



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Head Teacher: Mrs. L. Boulton
Deputy Head Teacher: Mrs. S. Simpson-May
Chair of Governors: Mrs. P. Crook

Byerley Road, Shildon, Co. Durham, DL4 1HN
Tel: 01388 772959
Email: timothyhackworth@durhamlearning.net
Website: www.timothyhackworthschool.co.uk

