

NATIONAL SCHOOL MEALS WEEK 2026

One BIG Celebration

Celebrating 120 years of school meals 1906 - 2026

Celebrating 120 Years of School Meals (1906-2026)

This year marks 120 years of school meals supporting children across the country. National School Meals Week celebrates the positive impact that nutritious school lunches have on children's health, well-being and learning, helping them stay energised, focused and ready to thrive throughout the school day.

FREE School Meals – Is your child eligible?

From September 2026, all Universal Credit households qualify, regardless of income.

More families than ever now qualify for free school meals. Even if you've checked before, eligibility has changed so you may qualify now.

Registering for free school meals is quick, confidential and could help you save money while ensuring your child receives a nutritious meal every school day.



Who receives free school meals?

1. Children in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2 – meals are funded by the government through Universal Free School Meals
2. Children in Year 3- Year 6 through the Free School Meals scheme
3. In London all primary school aged children receive meals for free, regardless of income.

Free and paid bookings are made via the details on your school's website.

To learn more and to check if you're eligible, follow this link:
Apply for free school meals - GOV.UK



What's Included in a School Meal?

Every school meal provides a balanced lunch that helps children stay energised throughout the afternoon.



Typically, pupils can choose from:

- A meat-based main meal
- A vegetarian or vegan main meal
- A jacket potato or pasta option

All meals are served with:

- A carbohydrate accompaniment
- Two portions of vegetables

Dessert choices include:

- Homemade puddings
- Fresh fruit
- Homemade yoghurt with fruit compote
- Jelly

Fresh Salad Bar



Children can also help themselves to a colourful selection of fresh salad items, including:

- Cucumber
- Tomatoes
- Peppers
- Lettuce
- Sweetcorn
- Carrots
- Beetroot

Homemade Bread

A simple wholemeal bread and a flavoured bread made fresh on site every day!



Why choose a School Meal?

- A balanced, nutritious lunch
- Plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables
- Variety and choice every day
- Opportunity for children to try new foods
- A hot meal prepared on site with fresh ingredients by our catering teams
- Children able to enjoy school meals with friends – which helps to build strong social eating habits

Benefits of a School Meal?

A nutritious lunch helps children:

- Stay focused and ready to learn
- Maintain energy levels throughout the school day
- Support healthy growth and development
- Develop positive eating habits for the future

Did you know?

School meals meet the government school food standards and are generally lower in fat, sugar and salt than packed lunches.

Trying a school meal is a great way for children to experience new flavours and ingredients in a safe and positive environment

A colourful plate often means a wider variety of nutrients. That's why vegetables and salad are available daily.



"When I visit our primary schools, I'm always delighted to see children chatting with friends over lunch, trying new foods and discovering new favourites. Our catering teams are at the heart of this experience. They know the children, understand their preferences and gently encourage them to explore different foods in a positive way. Every menu is carefully planned to meet School Food Standards and Food for Life Served Here standards, but for me it's seeing happy, confident children enjoying mealtimes together that really brings those menus to life."

Anushka Jadav - Pabulum Senior Nutritionist

Find out more by visiting our website:
www.pabulum-catering.co.uk

