Title of message: Free School Meals Renewals 2025

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Date: 26th August 2025 Action/Information: Information only

N.B This bulletin covers 2 areas of Free School Meals eligibility

- All schools including DFE early adopters
- Early Adopters Schools (DFE)

The renewals process for 2025 is complete (Solero).

All Schools

Renewal applications for pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) has now been completed. The SOLERO system has also been updated.

Please check your SOLERO report (Academic year 25/26) for the pupils who have an eligible application.

If a pupil is listed who no longer attends your school, please email us at **cs.enquiries@hertfordshire.gov.uk** with pupil's name, HCWH number, DOB and if known, name of new school and we will adjust the record.

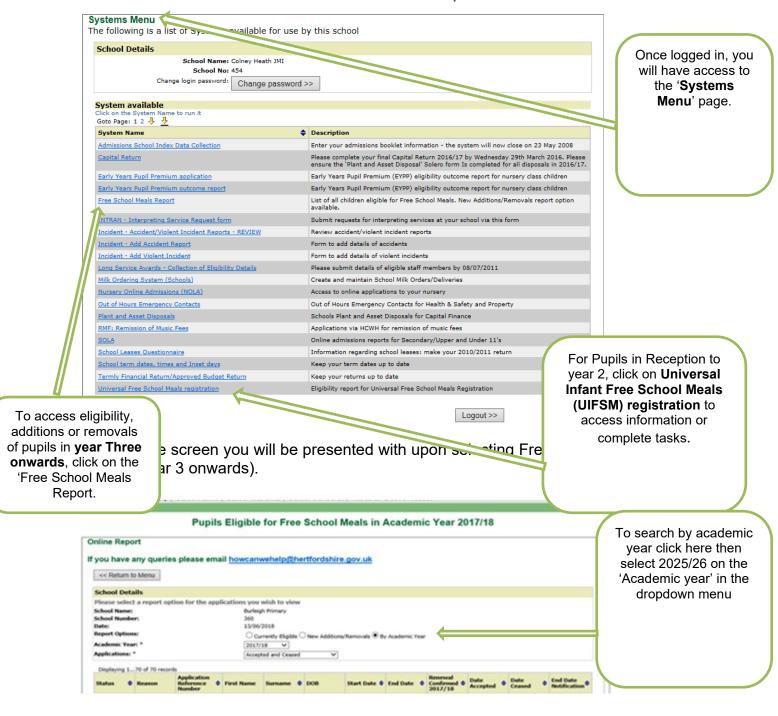
All Pupils in receipt of a FSM (from 1st April 2018) will continue to receive a FSM due to Transitional Protection. Eligibility criteria will change from September 2026 and transitional protection will cease. Further information will be supplied nearer the date

Below is an illustration of how to locate the new academic report on SOLERO.

Locating the new academic year report on SOLERO

The <u>link to Solero</u> can be found on the Hertfordshire Grid for Learning. Once logged in, you will have access to the 'Systems Menu' page.

Schools Online Electronic Returns and Outputs



Note: There is no academic year filter for the Universal Infant Free School Meal registration screen.

Universal Infants Free School Meal (UIFSM) - Reception to year 2

Applying for a FSM

Please continue to encourage parents/guardians to apply for a FSM (Children who have moved from year 2 to year 3 **must** reapply). An application for a FSM can be made via the **Free School Meals** webpage then clicking on the tab stating 'apply for a free school meal (year 3 and older)'.

Early Adopter Schools (DFE)

Pupils eligible for Free School Meals have been renewed on Solero, as described above, and pupils have also been migrated to the DFE system. The DFE system is the upto date version as it includes applications made since go live of system. Pupils migrated to the DFE system have come directly from your Solero on 13 August 2025 plus pupils moving to your school in September as informed by school's admissions team.

If pupils are missing from the DFE system that are/were appearing on your Solero system and showing as eligible for Free School Meals please supply details (HCWH number, child's name and DOB) to **CS.Enquiries@hertfordshire.gov.uk** and this will be investigated.

If a pupil is not shown on Solero or DFE system and you believe they are eligible for Free School Meals, this will be for several reasons including

- No application made from Year 2 Year 3 in previous years. If no application has been made when pupil went into year 3, then an application will need to be made
- Pupils have moved schools within Hertfordshire. It is probable that the
 Customer Service Centre has not been informed. Please email
 CS.Enquiries@hertfordshire.gov.uk with pupil's details. This will need to
 include HCWH number(if known) or parents NINO to be able to trace the
 application as well as child's name and DOB. We will then liaise with DFE to
 add pupils to DFE database.
- Pupils have moved schools from outside of Hertfordshire into
 Hertfordshire School. There will need to be a new application made by
 parents. If application comes back as not eligible and pupil was previously
 eligible, school will need to provide proof of eligibility from previous school and
 then supply details to CS.Enquiries@hertfordshire.gov.uk who will then
 liaise with DFE to make application eligible.

Music Applications

The application process for support with music fees (100% remission and 50%) changed in June 2022.

- Families wishing to view information or apply for music should Visit Hertfordshire Music Service page.
- For families unable to make an online application:
 - Schools are advised to support the family make the application on their behalf. Schools should speak to Hertfordshire Music Service (HMS) directly regarding offline applications.
 - At present HMS do not have a telephone number for offline referrals, however families can email the dedicated inbox for financial support applications Music.remission@herfordshire.gov.uk.

Further Information

For enquiries about this article or Pupil Premium please contact us at cs.enquiries@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Please refer to the <u>Free School Meals Guidance</u> for information about the Introduction of Universal Credit and the phasing out of other income based benefits.