



The Astley Cooper School

Responsibility • Respect • Resilience

July 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

From September 2026, the eligibility criteria for Free School Meals (FSM) will be changing. From the start of the new school year, all parents/carers who are in receipt of Universal Credit will be eligible for Free School Meals, regardless of the amount received. This includes, for the first time, our Sixth Form students.

Applying takes around 5 minutes, and you will need your National Insurance number.

Applications can be made using the following link: [Free school meals and other benefits | Hertfordshire County Council](#).

There is no requirement for students who are already receiving Free School Meals to re-apply.

Applications for the new school year can be made now. We encourage you to apply, even if you have been previously told you are not eligible. Not only will your child receive a meal at lunchtime, but the school will also receive additional funding to support pupils.

In addition to free school meals, we have been advised by Hertfordshire County Council that eligible students will be entitled to a Herts Card, offering discounts to children and young people, for lots of activities and days out that they might not be able to access otherwise. For more information, visit [Herts Card](#).

Yours sincerely

Mr Ian Tilbury
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