

Free School Meals Additional Funding High Uptake (87%) Guidance for Boroughs

Step by step process

This guidance document outlines the process for boroughs, specifically with links to a template form to be uploaded to the GLA OPS platform.

Local authorities (boroughs) are required to play a role in processing the claims on behalf of their schools. The process is as follows:

1. Boroughs must ensure schools are aware of their main borough contact and communicate any changes directly with schools
2. Schools should collect their data in w/c 9 February and w/c 16 March
3. Schools must email their borough officer with their completed Summary Form by 17 April 2026.
4. Borough officers must review each Summary Form, ensuring that the data provided is accurate and complete in full
5. Boroughs should then download the Borough Form to complete information about all schools who have successfully submitted requests for additional funding related to over 87 percent pupil uptake.
6. Completed Borough Forms must be uploaded on to GLA OPS by **1 May 2026**.

The GLA will review all claims submitted via OPS after the May 1st deadline. Once a claim has been approved, the GLA will write to boroughs with their additional funding allocations (in total – including any additional funding for special Schools and for exceptional circumstances), in Summer 2026.

Additional funding payments will be made alongside the 1st milestone payment of Year 4 (academic year 2026/27) directly to boroughs.

Boroughs must administer funding to schools no later than 1 month following receipt of payment. Boroughs can administer funding to schools in advance of receipt of payment, as long as written confirmation of additional funding allocations has been received.

Borough officers should review each form received from schools, ensuring that the data provided is accurate. The GLA will only consider Summary Forms completed with the correct information. The GLA reserves the right to request further information or evidence outlined below.

By submitting the Borough Form to the GLA, the local authority automatically confirms the Summary Form returns as authorised by the head teacher for that school. This disclosure indicates schools have entered accurate data that has been validated by the head teacher.

The GLA will review meal uptake figures alongside number of pupils on roll in January 2026 with supporting evidence.

Key Dates

- w/c 9 February 2026: First collection period for schools to submit higher uptake data.
- w/c 16 March 2026: Second collection period for schools to submit higher uptake data.
- 17 April 2026 - last date to submit form to boroughs

- 1 May 2026 - last date for boroughs to submit claims to the GLA
- August 2026 – funding issued to boroughs