

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

Step by step process

Schools are required to provide data on meal uptake for two key dates. One date from the week commencing **9 February 2026** and one date on the week commencing **16 March 2026**.

Submitting a claim

1. Download the Summary Form template for monitoring school meal uptake.
2. Select **one date** during each of the proposed weeks for when you will record your school's meal uptake.
3. Enter the data for the school uptake. This must be done one two occasions – one day on the week commencing 9 February, and one day in the week commencing 16 March.
4. Check the data is accurate and that the priority information is showing.
5. Ensure the school head teacher has reviewed the data and signs the form before submitting to the borough.
6. Email borough leads with the Summary Form completed before **17 April 2026**. Data from both collection dates (February and March) must be submitted in the same Summary Form.
7. Boroughs may have their own process for collecting completed Summary Forms, please contact your borough officer to confirm.
8. The GLA may request further evidence, such as such as school dinner records, where forms do not provide enough details. Forms should be checked by the headteacher before submission.
9. Please contact the GLA if you are unsure who your borough contact is:
UFSMTeam@london.gov.uk

As part of the GLA's checking procedure, schools may be asked to provide further information before any funding is issued, particularly if data is missing or incomplete in forms.

Information may include:

- official uptake data downloads from management information system (MIS) provider platforms
- uptake data from catering providers
- school meal registration forms

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 (see borough guidance for payment to schools' information)