

Claiming additional funding for meals uptake above 90 per cent

Data collection requirements for schools

The Mayor of London Sadiq Khan with school students seated around a table with school meals.

Key information

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Contents

- [1. Context](#)
- [2. Summary](#)
- [3. Contacting your borough officers](#)
- [4. Process in detail](#)
- [5. Submitting a claim](#)
- [6. GLA checking process](#)
- [7. Supporting information](#)
- [8. Key dates](#)
- [9. Guidance for boroughs](#)
- [10. Information for Management Information System providers](#)

Process under review

Update: Thursday 18 December 2025

The process for claiming additional funding has changed.

All requests from local authorities to claim additional funding will now be submitted and reviewed at a single point within the academic year. This includes claiming additional funding for high uptake (above 87% take-up), Special Schools, and for exceptional circumstances.

Further details and updated guidance will be shared by email in **January 2026**.

The data collection periods for claiming higher uptake will move slightly later in the year, to:

- week commencing 9 February 2026: First collection period for schools to submit higher uptake data.
- week commencing 16 March 2026: Second collection period for schools to submit higher uptake data.

You may wish to notify your schools about the above dates. The Greater London Authority (GLA) will communicate this to schools in the [Mayor's school newsletter](#) week commencing 12 January 2026.

The below process on this page is for **information only** and should not be considered as the process for claiming additional funding in the academic year 2025–26.

1. Context

The Mayor of London is providing £140m emergency funding to help families across London with the spiralling cost-of-living, by ensuring all primary-school children in state-funded schools have access to a free school meal during term time. This funding will help up to 270,000 primary-school children in the capital receive free school meals (FSM), and could save families around £500 per pupil per year.

This page gives an overview of the process for schools to provide evidence to claim additional funding. This process will be in place for the academic year 2024-25.

Schools have been allocated funding for pupils who are not receiving government funding for FSM. This calculation was based on the number of non-government-funded pupils at KS2 on census day in January 2024, at a rate of £3 per meal, and assuming up to 90 per cent of pupils take the Mayor's FSM.

Funding is issued to local authorities, and they administer the funding to their state funded schools.

Where a school has over 90 per cent pupil uptake, they can claim for the additional funding if they can provide the evidence listed below.

Please note, the following process is optional. Only schools where their pupil meal uptake rate is over 90 per cent, and they want to claim additional funding, are required to follow this process.

2. Summary

Schools that wish to claim for over 90 per cent uptake are asked to provide snapshot data on school meal uptake at two points in 2025. Both data submissions must show uptake rates are above 90 per cent.

Schools should note that the additional funding they claim will directly reflect the percentage uptake above 90 per cent. For example, for a claim showing 96 per cent meal uptake, the school would receive 6 per cent more funding than their original allocation. This top-up funding first goes to the borough, who should then issue the difference to the school before July.

The data must show the take-up rate as it occurred on the following two dates:

- one date on week commencing 13 January 2025
- one date on week commencing 3 March 2025.

Schools with a high proportion of children practising Ramadan may wish to choose the week before to collect data for the second data collection date, week commencing **24 February 2025**. Schools should make a note of this on the form and notify their local authority when they submit the information.

Schools will need to complete a form (outlined in the form template linked in section 4) on these two dates, and share with their borough officer before Friday 14 March 2025.

Schools may be required to provide additional information (such as school dinner records) if requested by the GLA.

Schools should ensure the data form is checked by the head teacher before submitting to the borough officer. The GLA will request further evidence if forms do not provide sufficient detail.

If schools have experienced an increase in pupil intake during this academic year, which impacts the number of pupils on roll, and thus meal uptake, they should contact their borough to notify the GLA via a separate process.

3. Contacting your borough officers

Your named borough officers will have been in contact with your school identifying themselves; providing their contact details; and giving further details on the wider monitoring and evaluation process.

If you are unsure who your borough contact is, please email the GLA at UFSMTeam@london.gov.uk.

4. Process in detail

This process requires schools to enter data on meal uptake for two key dates, meaning one date on week commencing 13 January 2025 and one date on week commencing 3 March 2025.

Schools must [download a Summary Form excel template](#) to enter data manually.

Follow this process:

- Download the Summary Form for monitoring school meal uptake (in link above).
- Manually enter the data for school meal uptake. This must be done for **both dates in January and March (potentially February if a school has a high proportion of children practising Ramadan)**, before sending to boroughs.?
- Check the data is accurate and that priority information is showing.
- Ensure head teacher checks data, and signs form before submitting.
- Email borough lead with the Summary Form with both dates as evidence before **Friday 14 March 2025**.
- Boroughs may have their own process for collecting forms.

5. Submitting a claim

Once schools have checked the Summary Form, they should email this to the borough officer with any supplementary notes.

Schools should **send both collection dates in one form at the same time.**

6. GLA checking process

The GLA asks borough officers to check the form received from schools. The GLA will only consider forms that include the correct information. The GLA may request further information or evidence as outlined below.

The GLA will review meal uptake figures and the number of pupils on roll in January 2025. These figures will be compared with the original funding allocated and with the number of pupils on roll in January 2024. As allocations were based on January 2024 census figures, this will be taken into consideration when top-up figures are calculated.

If schools have experienced an increase in pupil intake in this academic year, which impacts the number of pupils on roll, and thus meal uptake, they should contact their borough to notify the GLA via a separate process.

7. Supporting information

The act of submitting the data to the GLA through the local authority automatically **confirms** the return as **authorised by the head teacher**. This disclosure indicates **schools have entered accurate data that has been validated by the head teacher**.

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.

8. Key dates

- one date on w/c 13 January 2025 – data collection one
- one date on w/c 3 March 2025 – data collection two
- Friday 14 March 2025 – last date to submit form to boroughs
- Wednesday 30 April 2025 – last date for boroughs to submit claims to the GLA
- May 2025 – the GLA issues funding to boroughs
- July 2025 – boroughs issue funding to schools

Schools with a high proportion of children practising Ramadan may wish to choose the week before to collect data for the second data collection date – **week commencing 24 February 2025**.

Schools should make a note of this on the form and notify their local authority when they submit the information.

9. Guidance for boroughs

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

Schools have been allocated funding for pupils who are not receiving government funding for FSM. This calculation was based on the number of non-government funded pupils at KS2 on census day in January 2024, at a rate of £3.00 per meal, and assuming up to 90 per cent pupils taking the Mayor's FSM.

Funding is issued to local authorities, and they administer the funding to their state-funded schools.

Where a school has over 90 per cent of pupils taking up the offer, they can claim for the additional funding if they can provide the evidence as listed below.

The GLA asks local authorities to play a role in processing the claims on behalf of their schools. The process for this is outlined below:

- Boroughs will be sent full details on the process in December 2024/
- Boroughs will need to inform schools about the main borough contact relating to this process
- Schools should collect their data in January and March (potentially February if a school has a high proportion of children practising Ramadan). They should only email boroughs with supporting evidence for **both dates**.
- Between 7 March and 14 March 2025 schools will email boroughs with their forms as evidence.
- Boroughs are asked to check forms are complete.
- Boroughs should download the borough form to complete information about all schools. Log onto OPS to upload the borough forms and the school forms. Borough officers have until 30 April 2025 to submit evidence on OPS.

You must [download the borough form to summarise schools data](#). Boroughs should download this first, enter the data on their schools, then upload to OPS.

The GLA will review all claims submitted via OPS after the deadline on 30 April 2025. Once a claim is approved, payment takes about four working days. The GLA will write to boroughs with their allocations, and issue funding to boroughs, before the end of May 2025.

Boroughs are asked to administer the funding to schools before the academic year ends in July 2025.

10. Information for Management Information System providers

The GLA asks schools to submit claims by manually entering data into a template form on two dates in 2025.

Details of the process can be found in earlier sections of this guidance, directed at schools.

The GLA may ask for further information from schools if their form submission is missing data. This could include downloads of school meal uptake data from their MIS providers or catering providers.

Schools will need to access information according to the following:

- total number of pupils on roll in Years 3 to 6, for January and March 2025
- total meals taken by government-funded FSM-eligible pupils in Years 3,4,5 and 6
- total meals taken by pupils eligible for non-government-funded FSM (Mayor-funded meals)
- percentage uptake by pupils eligible for non-government-funded FSM eligible (Mayor-funded meals).

As part of this process, MIS providers do not necessarily have to make changes to their platforms due to schools adhering to a manual process. However, they should be aware of the information required should schools contact them about obtaining this information.

[Back to table of contents](#)