HAF eligibility 2026/27- A short guide for parents and carers

Looking for a funded Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) place from winter 2026? Here's what you need to know.

What changed in September 2026?

From September 2026, Free School Meals (FSM) became available to children in all households receiving Universal Credit, regardless of income. However, receiving Free School Meals does not automatically mean your child qualifies for a funded HAF place.

HAF is still focused on Targeted Free School Meal criteria, not those on expanded FSM.

Can my child get a funded HAF place?

From September 2026, the **existing HAF eligibility rules** still apply:

Receiving Universal Credit with an annual household income of £7,400 or less?

Your child receives free schools meals and remains eligible for a funded HAF place. ✓

If your annual household income is above £7,400: your child may receive Free School Meals but will not qualify for a funded HAF place under the standard criteria. ✗

Unsure? Ask your local authority to confirm your child's eligibility.

Why does my child no longer qualify?

Some children who attended HAF before may now be ineligible, even if they still receive Free School Meals.

This is because **Transitional protections**, that were in place since 2018, ended after the 2025/26 school year. These protections allowed some children to keep Free School Meals and HAF eligibility even when their family's circumstances changed.

What other support is available?

If your child no longer qualifies for HAF, you can explore:

Paid holiday clubs: places may be available, including at clubs offering HAF-funded places.

Tax-Free Childcare: depending on your circumstances, this may help with childcare costs. https://www.gov.uk/tax-free-childcare

Local support: check your council website for other holiday activities, childcare and family support. https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk