



25 June 2026

Dear parents/carers

Upcoming Changes to Free School Meals (FSM) and Universal Credit Eligibility

We are writing to inform you about important national changes to Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility that will come into effect from the start of the 2026/27 school year.

The UK Government has confirmed that, from September 2026, all children in England whose households receive Universal Credit will be entitled to Free School Meals, regardless of their overall household income.

What is Changing?

Under current rules, families must earn below £7,400 per year (after tax and not including benefits) to qualify for free school meals. From September 2026, this earnings threshold will no longer apply - any family receiving Universal Credit will be eligible. This change is expected to support over half a million additional pupils across England.

Transitional protections for free meals will finish at the end of the current school year. From September 2026, pupils must meet the FSM eligibility criteria to continue receiving provision.

When Will This Happen?

The new entitlement will begin at the start of the school year in September 2026. Schools nationwide are preparing now to accommodate the increased number of children who will receive meals.

Do Parents Need to Apply?

Yes, all parents and carers must submit a new application, including those children who are currently receiving Free School Meals.

Although eligibility will cover all families on Universal Credit, parents will still need to apply for free school meals so the school can process and confirm entitlement. Applications are expected to open before the start of the 2026 - 2027 school year, typically requiring your National Insurance Number and Universal Credit Reference Number. We are awaiting an update from Local Authorities regarding how to apply.

Why Is This Change Being Made?

This expansion aims to:

- **Reduce child poverty** - estimates suggest around 100,000 children will be lifted out of poverty.
- **Ease living costs for families** during a period of rising expenses.
- **Ensure fair access** to healthy school meals for all children on Universal Credit.



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We will contact families again closer to the application period with details on how to apply.

In the meantime, if you have any questions, please contact the school office, and they will be happy to help.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours faithfully

Mr D Bedford
Headteacher



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