



23rd June 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are writing with regards to the changes to children's eligibility for Free School Meals which are taking effect from September 2026.

Since April 2018, the Department for Education have provided a Transitional Protection to make sure that children would not lose their eligibility for Free School Meals when parents are transferred from other benefits to Universal Credit. The Transitional Protection will be closed by the Department for Education at the end of the Summer Term so all parents will need to re-apply for Free School Meals (FSM) before the start of the Autumn term in September if you would like your eligibility to continue.

Going forward there will be two categories of eligibility, **Targeted** and **Expanded**.

Parents in receipt of the following benefits will be entitled to FSM for their children under the **Targeted** category -

- Universal Credit and the household income is below £7400 per year as assessed by HMRC
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Income Based Employment and Support Allowance
- Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit
- Families eligible under the No Recourse to Public Funds criteria (NRPF)

Children eligible through the **Targeted** category will be entitled to Free School Meals, be included in funding provided to schools for the Deprivation Pupil Premium and will be eligible for Holiday Access Fund vouchers (while the scheme is provided). This may also help with eligibility for Free School Transport. The additional support would also be available for children who would receive a free school meal due to being taught in the Reception, 1 and 2 year groups if their parents were receiving one of the qualifying benefits and made a claim.

Parents in receipt of the following benefits will be entitled to FSM under the **Expanded** category -

- Universal Credit and the household income is above £7400 per year as assessed by HMRC

Children eligible through the **Expanded** category will be entitled to Free School Meals only. No other additional support is available through this category of eligibility.

Claims need to be made at the school your child attends, so if you have children at more than one school, please make sure that you apply for each child at their relevant school. Children on roll in our school nursery might also be eligible if they are in nursery for at least one full day per week (attending both before and after lunch). Please contact us to discuss this if you think it applies for your child as it will mean we can claim additional funding for the school.

For both types of eligibility, we will need to recheck your claim(s) once per school year as children will only be eligible for the support explained above while their parents are in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits. If you find that your circumstances change over the course of the school year and you feel that your children's eligibility needs to be re-checked, please let us know.

If your child moves to a new school over the course of the school year and they were eligible while attending this school, please let the new school know and they can contact us for details.

In order to apply for Free School Meals for your child(ren) for September 2026 you will need to complete an application form and bring it to the school office. The following documents will also be required:

- Full name as recorded on their benefits documents
- Date of Birth
- National Insurance Number

If you believe you qualify for either the Targeted or Expanded provision, please bring the above documents along with the completed form into the school office before the 14th July 2026 to enable us to check your eligibility in time for September.

If you have any questions, please do contact us.

Mrs Tracey Marshall
Headteacher