

17 June 2026

Dear Parents and Carers

We are writing to let you know about important changes to Free School Meals (FSM) starting in September 2026. These changes may affect whether your child is eligible now or in the future.

What is changing?

From September 2026 **all children in households receiving Universal Credit will be eligible for Free School Meals**, regardless of income. Free School Meals may also be available to families receiving support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

Children are only eligible to receive Free School Meals once an application (claim) has been completed, and their eligibility verified by the local authority.

Households **may** also be entitled to Free Schools Meals if they:

- Receive income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Receive the guarantee element of Pension Credit
- Have no recourse to public funds

End of current protections

Previously, once a child qualified for Free School Meals, they kept this entitlement until the end of their current stage of education, even if family circumstances changed. This is called Transitional Protection. This protection will finish with the end of the 2025/26 school year.

From September 2026, eligibility will be based on your current circumstances. This means some children may become eligible, while others may no longer qualify, depending on changes to income or benefits.

Important: You need to apply!

Even if you receive Universal Credit, **free school meals are NOT automatically given**. You **must apply through the school**. If your young person is eligible, they can have a free, nutritious lunch every day, and the school may also receive additional funding to help support them.

What should you do now?

We strongly encourage all our parents and carers to apply by [CLICKING THIS LINK](#).

FSM Application Form

If your circumstances change, please notify the school ASAP

These changes are designed to help more families access Free School Meals. If you would like to discuss this confidentially, please contact the school.

Best wishes

Mrs A Chapman
Finance Manager

