

Acting Principal: Ms N Johnson

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: 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 2026/2027 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. Your child may therefore be entitled to receive free school meals. You could also raise additional pupil premium funding for your child's school to fund support like extra tuition, additional teaching staff or after school activities.

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.

What this means for your family

- **No income cap:** If your household receives Universal Credit, your child will be eligible.
- **Financial savings:** Families could save up to **£495 per child per year** on school lunches.
- **Support for wellbeing:** Access to a nutritious daily meal has been shown to improve children's health, concentration and learning outcomes.

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. 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. Families who are currently in receipt of Free School Meals will be rechecked and further checks will be ongoing. Applications are now open and typically require your National Insurance Number and Universal Credit Reference Number. Please follow the link to apply:- <https://tinyurl.com/2rdruwvk>.

'We will make the biggest difference to the lives of all our students by laying the foundations to encourage a successful future'

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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.

Next Steps

As stated above, schools nationwide are making arrangements to accommodate the potential increase in uptake for free school meals.

Please visit the school website for additional information about our school lunches and our daily menu options.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the school. We are also happy for parents to drop in and ask questions during the school day.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours faithfully.



Ms N Johnson
Acting Principal.

