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18th June 2026

Dear Parent/Guardian

I write 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(s) your child(ren) attend, so if you have children at more than one school, please make sure that you apply for each child at their relevant 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 you will need to complete an application form and bring it to the school office or for parents with No Recourse to Public Funds, please contact us for information about how to apply

Complete an application form and provide evidence of your eligibility for one of the qualifying benefits –

- The last three months full Universal Credit Statements. The section at the top confirming that you have received Universal Credit is not sufficient, we need to be able to see your household income as well
- Photocopy of Pension Credit M1000 award notice
- Photocopy of letter from the Home Office confirming support under the Immigration and Asylum Act
- A copy of your proof of benefit letter for Income Based Employment and Support Allowance
- For parents with No Recourse to Public Funds, please contact us for details on how to apply

Yours Sincerely

Claire Garnett

Headteacher