

Dear Parents and Carers,

FREE SCHOOL MEALS INFORMATION ACTION NEEDED FROM ALL FAMILIES

The Government is introducing significant changes to Free School Meals (FSM) from September 2026. We are writing to explain how these changes may affect your family and what action you need to take to ensure your child continues to receive their entitlement.

What is changing?

Expanded eligibility

From September 2026, all families receiving Universal Credit will be entitled to Free School Meals. This means the previous household income cap for receiving a free meal is being removed.

End of transitional protections

The previous "transitional protections" arrangement is ending. This means that eligibility awarded in the past will no longer automatically continue. ***You must complete a new FSM eligibility form to continue receiving free school meal support next academic year.***

New annual eligibility checks

In line with new Government requirements, schools must now carry out compulsory annual eligibility checks for all families receiving FSM support.

The new FSM categories

From September 2026, benefits-related Free School Meals will fall into two categories:

Targeted FSM

For families receiving Universal Credit and earning £7,400 or less per year.

This includes:

- Free school meals
- Pupil Premium funding
- Holiday activity support
- Possible uniform assistance and other additional support

Expanded FSM

For families receiving Universal Credit and earning above £7,400 per year.

This entitlement includes:

- Free school meals only

What do you need to do?

To ensure your child's meals are correctly set up for the new academic year, you must reapply if either of the following applies to you:

If you currently receive Free School Meals

As automatic protections are ending, we cannot carry forward your current FSM status automatically. You must complete a new eligibility check to continue receiving free school meals from September 2026.

If you think you may now be eligible

If you receive Universal Credit but were previously refused Free School Meals because your earnings were above the old threshold, your child may now qualify under the new rules.

Important Information for Reception and Key Stage 1 Parents

All children in Early Years Foundation Stage or Key Stage 1 already receive free meals under the Universal Infant Free School Meals scheme. However, we still encourage you to apply.

This is because schools receive **Pupil Premium funding** for children who qualify under **Targeted Free School Meal eligibility**. This funding helps support your child during their time at school.

How to apply

Please complete the FSM Eligibility Form using the following link:

[Woodlands School Free School Meals Registration – Fill out form](#)

Important deadline

If we do not receive your eligibility certificate before the start of the new term, your child will not be registered for Free School Meals from September 2026.

To ensure your entitlement is set up in Arbor in time for September, please apply as soon as possible and no later than **Friday 17 July 2026**.

Thank you for your cooperation and support as we transition to the new system.

Please note that all current Free School Meal entitlements will remain in place until the end of the Summer Term.

Yours faithfully

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Headteachers

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