

June 2026

Dear Parent/Carer,

## Changes to Free School Meals and Pupil Premium Funding from September 2026

We are writing to inform you of important national changes to Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility and how this links to funding for schools (known as the *Pupil Premium*).

These changes will come into effect from **September 2026** and may affect your child's entitlement.

### What is changing?

From September 2026, the government is expanding access to Free School Meals:

- **All children in households receiving Universal Credit will now be entitled to free school meals**, regardless of income.
- This replaces the previous income threshold of £7,400 per year.

This means many more families will become eligible.

Important changes to be aware of;

**1. Two types of Free School Meals** From September 2026, there will be two categories:

- **Targeted FSM** – for families with lower incomes (still linked to Pupil Premium funding)
- **Expanded FSM** – for other households receiving Universal Credit (free meals only)

**2. Changes to Pupil Premium funding**

- Schools receive additional funding (*Pupil Premium*) to support disadvantaged pupils.
- This funding is currently linked to children who are eligible for FSM (or have been in the past 6 years).
- **Not all pupils who become newly eligible for FSM from September 2026 will attract Pupil Premium funding.**

**3. End of transitional protection**

- Since 2018, some pupils have continued to receive FSM even if family circumstances changed.
- **This protection will end at the end of the 2025–2026 academic year.**
- From September 2026, eligibility will depend on your **current circumstances**.

### What does this mean for families?

- Some families **newly receiving Universal Credit may now qualify** for free school meals.
- Some pupils who currently receive FSM under older rules may **need to reapply** or may no longer be eligible if they do not meet the new criteria.
- It is important that **all eligible families apply**, even if your child already receives free meals in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2, as this helps the school secure valuable funding to support pupils.

### What do you need to do?

- If you think you may now be eligible, please apply for Free School Meals through <https://apply.cloudforedu.org.uk/ofsm/southampton>
- If your child currently receives FSM, we recommend you **check your eligibility again from June 2026** to ensure this continues into September.
- If you are unsure, please contact the school office and we will be happy to help.

### Why this matters

Applying for FSM not only provides free meals but also helps the school access additional funding to support students through:

- Academic support and intervention
- Enrichment opportunities
- Pastoral care and wellbeing provision

We understand that these changes may be confusing. Please be assured that we are here to support you and will share further guidance as it becomes available.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,



Kerry Pace

Data & Admissions Manager