

2 July 2026

Dear Parent / Carer

Subject: Changes to free school meals (FSM) from the 2026 to 2027 academic year

I am writing to confirm changes to free school meals (FSM) from the start of the next academic year – from September 2026.

What is changing?

Expanded entitlement for families on Universal Credit

From the start of academic year 2026/27, all children in households receiving Universal Credit will be entitled to free school meals, regardless of earnings.

Going forward, there will be two types of eligibility:

- **Targeted FSM:** for households in receipt of universal credit earning £7,400 or less (includes free meals and additional support such as pupil premium). Other educational entitlements such as the Holiday Activities and Food program (HAF) and the 'extended rights' element of school travel assistance, will also continue to be based on targeted FSM.
- **Expanded FSM:** for households in receipt of universal credit earning above £7,400 (free meals only)

Families with no recourse to public funds may also be eligible for Targeted FSM subject to meeting separate criteria.

For information, if you have younger children, all pupils in reception, year 1 and year 2 will also continue to be entitled to free school meals under the universal infant free school meals policy regardless of family circumstances.

End of transitional protections

Since 2018, some children have continued to receive free school meals, even if their family circumstances changed during the rollout of Universal Credit. This is referred to as transitional protections.

Now that entitlement is being expanded to all families on Universal Credit, these protections will end at the end of the 2025 to 2026 academic year.

This means:

- Some children may **no longer be eligible** from the start of the 2026 to 2027 academic year if their family does not receive Universal Credit or another qualifying benefit
- Eligibility will now be based on current benefit status

What you need to do

If your child currently receives free school meals:

- In most cases, you do not need to reapply
- The school will check your eligibility automatically using the details already held and inform you of any changes to your FSM eligibility
- In some cases, the school or the local authority may contact you to confirm your details
- If you are unsure, please contact the local authority for advice.

If your child does not currently receive free school meals

- You may now be eligible under the expanded criteria
- You will need to apply through Devon local authority using the link below:

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/children-families-education/education/school-meals/applying-for-free-school-meals/>

Not sure?

If you are unsure whether you need to apply or if your circumstances have changed, please contact Devon local authority. They will be able to advise and support you.

We publish how we use Pupil Premium funding on the school website. Children eligible for Targeted FSM also receive support towards enrichment activities and uniform costs. For more information, please contact the school using the email address info@plymstockschool.org.uk.

Yours sincerely



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