

22 July 2026



Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Changes to Free School Meals (FSM) from the 2026 to 2027 Academic Year

We are writing to let you know about changes to free school meals (FSM) from the start of the 2026 to 2027 academic year.

What is changing? Expanded entitlement for families on Universal Credit.

From the start of academic year 2026 to 2027, all children living in households that receive Universal Credit will be entitled to free school meals, regardless of earnings. If you are not in receipt of a FSM and think you are now eligible, you will need to apply.

Going forward, there will be two types of eligibility:

1 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.

2 Expanded FSM: For households in receipt of universal credit earning above £7,400 (free meals only) Families with no entitlement to public funds may also be eligible for Targeted FSM subject to meeting a separate criteria.

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 cease at the end of the 2025 to 2026 academic year.

This means: Some children may no longer be eligible from the start from September 2026, 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, however you may still want to check with North Lincolnshire County Council. If in doubt, please contact the free School Meals team (link at the bottom).

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- The local authority will check your eligibility automatically using the details already held and inform you of any changes to your FSM eligibility.
- North Lincolnshire County Council has advised that it has been unable to automatically re check all existing claims because some historical records contain incomplete information.
- In some cases, the Academy may contact you please keep an eye out for communications from us.
- **If your child is starting at a new school in September, or if they are moving from Year 6 into Year 7, you will need to submit a new Free School Meals application.**
- If you are unsure, please contact the FSM team at North Lincolnshire County Council 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 your local authority once their checking system
- All the details for applying for FSM are available via Apply for free school meals – North Lincolnshire County Council via the link [HERE](#)

Not sure?

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

Link to check eligibility for [Free School Meals](#)

Yours sincerely



Chris Chancellor
Assistant Principal