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12th June 2026

Dear Parents and carers,

We write to inform you about some important changes taking place to Free School Meals (FSM) eligibility which will take effect from 1st September 2026.

What's Changing

- Families who are in receipt of Universal Credit (UC) will qualify for FSM. This means that more children will become eligible
- There will be two categories for FSM entitlements. These are:
 - Targeted – For children in households who receive UC with annual earnings of £7400 or less
 - Children in this category will qualify for FSM
 - School will receive additional Pupil Premium Funding
 - Be considered for other support such as Holiday Activities and Funding (HAF) and extended rights to element of travel assistance
 - Extended – For children in households who receive UC with an annual income exceeding £7400
 - Children will receive a FSM
 - No further benefits
- Existing Protection for Free School Meals will end in July 2026
- All children receiving FSM will be reassessed a minimum of once a year with the first reassessment taking place before 1st September 2026

What you need to do

- If your child is currently in receipt of FSM you do not need to do anything at this stage. The reassessments will take place automatically and should any further information be required you will be contacted. You will be advised should your eligibility change from September, once we have been informed of any changes.
- If you do not currently receive FSM, are in receipt of UC and would like to apply, please complete the online application form at:

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/free-school-meals>

Please note that successful applications will not be eligible for FSM until September unless your earnings are below £7400 and you fall in to the Targeted category. We ask you to apply as soon as possible so that this can be processed for the start of the new academic year.

Universal Free School Meals for KS1

Universal Free School Meals for children in Reception, Year 1 & 2 will continue for the next academic year. However, if you qualify for FSM either within the Targeted and Extended category as mentioned previously, we encourage you to also apply for FSM using the link above.

Further information about the changes can be found on the Government website using the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/free-school-meals-guidance-for-schools-and-local-authorities/free-school-meals-guidance-for-local-authorities-local-authority-maintained-schools-academies-and-free-schools>

Yours sincerely



Mrs Sarah Moss
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