

Important Update: Free School Meals

The Department for Education (DfE) has recently updated its guidance on Free School Meals (FSM), with important changes coming into effect from **September 2026**. Please read the following carefully to understand how this may affect your child.

What's Staying the Same – until August 2026

- If your child has been eligible for Free School Meals at any time between April 2018 and August 2026, they will continue to receive FSM.
- You do not need to reapply, even if your household income or circumstances have changed.

Protections were introduced to support families and ensure children receive a free school meal regardless of any financial change in circumstances during the rollout of Universal Credit and this will remain in place until the end of the 2025/2026 school year.

What This Means for You

- If your child is moving from primary to secondary school in September 2025, you do not need to reapply for FSM at that point.

What's Changing – From September 2026

- From the 2026/2027 school year, all children in households receiving Universal Credit will be entitled to Free School Meals, regardless of income.
 - The current £7,400 income threshold will be removed.
 - Transitional protections will end.
 - To qualify for FSM from September 2026 onward, your household must be receiving Universal Credit at the time of eligibility assessment.
 - From September 2026, schools and local authorities will check FSM eligibility once a year, to avoid any sudden changes for families during the school year.
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Need More Information?

If you have any questions or would like further clarification, please email the Free School Meals Team: freeschoolmeals@suffolk.gov.uk.

We'll continue to share any further updates from the Department for Education as soon as they are available.