



Wednesday 20th May 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

Re: Important Changes to Free School Meals from September 2026

You may be aware that, as part of initiatives to tackle child poverty, the Government is expanding the eligibility for Free School Meals to all households in receipt of Universal Credit (UC) from September 2026. Up to now, eligibility was limited to those eligible to UC with income below £7,400 or those covered by the transitional protection. With this measure, the Government expects that about 500,000 more children will benefit from free meals across the country.

At the same time, there will be a decoupling of FSM eligibility and pupil premium eligibility and the end of the transitional protection. This means there will be 2 categories of FSM students from September 2026:

- **Targeted FSM** for families in receipt of Universal Credit with earnings of £7,400 or less. These students will get the free school meal plus pupil premium.
- **Expanded FSM** for families in receipt of Universal Credit with earnings above the income threshold (£7,400). These students will get the free school meal only.

Transitional protections for Free School Meals have been in effect since April 2018. This has meant that pupils becoming eligible for free meals under the benefits-based criteria have retained their entitlement, even if their household earnings improved above the threshold. From the start of the 2026-2027 academic year, transitional protections for FSM will end and households must meet the FSM eligibility criteria to continue receiving provision.

This means that we will now be required to check all FSM entitlements annually.

Please could you complete this [FSM Application Form](#) if you are either currently in receipt of Free School Meals, or if you believe you will become eligible under the new expansion (ie, you receive Universal Credit). We need to complete these checks ahead of the start of the autumn term so please could we ask that you complete the form as soon as possible and no later than **Friday 26th June 2026**. We will keep your information on file and use this to re-check your eligibility every year.

If we do not receive the relevant information from you to be able to complete a check, then your child will NOT receive a free school lunch in September.

Yours sincerely

The Finance Team
Gosford Hill School