Dear Parent/Carer

We are writing to let you know about some important changes to Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility that will start from **1 September 2026**.

What is changing?

From September, there will be two categories of Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility under the Universal Credit criteria:

Eligible targeted: this covers children in households in receipt of Universal Credit with annual household earnings of £7,400 or less. These children will attract pupil premium and other disadvantage funding for their schools. Other education entitlements, such as the holiday activities and food programme (HAF) and the 'extended rights' element of school travel assistance, will be based on targeted free school meals.

Eligible expanded: this covers children who are in households receiving Universal Credit with annual household earnings exceeding £7,400. Children will be entitled to free school meals only.

Both groups will receive free school meals.

Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM)

All children in **Reception, Year 1 and Year 2** will continue to receive free school meals, regardless of income.

End of transitional protections

Temporary protections currently in place will **end at the end of the 2025–2026 school year**.

This means from September 2026:

- All families will need to meet the **current eligibility rules**
- Some children who currently receive free meals **may no longer qualify**

Checking eligibility

The Local Authority will review **all existing** Free School Meal claims before the new school year.

You **do not need to reapply** as long as your information is already held by the Local Authority.

The Local Authority may contact you if any further information is needed to confirm your child's eligibility

It is very important that:

- you provide any additional information requested
- Do not assume your child will continue to receive FSM without confirmation

How often eligibility is checked

From now on:

- Eligibility will usually be checked **once a year**
- Once your child is confirmed eligible, they **will not be reassessed during the school year**

What you need to do

✓ Look out for updates from us or the Local Authority
✓ Respond promptly if asked to provide information

Further information

We will share more updates, guidance, and answers to common questions as soon as they are available.

For any further information please contact the freeschoolmeals@devon.gov.uk