

June 2026

Dear Parents/Carers,

RE: GOVERNMENT CHANGES TO FREE SCHOOL MEALS

From September 2026, the Government is expanding eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM). All children in households receiving Universal Credit will become eligible for Free School Meals, regardless of household earnings.

Your child will be eligible if you access:

- Universal Credit

Aside from Universal Credit, children remain eligible if their parents receive:

- Support under Part VI of the **Immigration and Asylum Act 1999**.
- The guarantee part of **Pension Credit**

Households may also be entitled to a free school meal if:

- are in receipt of income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- meet criteria set out in separate guidance for families with no recourse to public funds

There will be two categories of free school meal eligibility:

- 1) **Targeted** free school meals – for families with a household income of £7,400 or less. These pupils will attract Pupil Premium funding for schools therefore can also benefit from additional support such as the Holidays and Food (HAF) Programme and support with funding curriculum essential activities.
- 2) **Expanded** free school meals – a new category covering pupils who do not qualify for targeted FSM, but who are in households receiving Universal Credit.

Pupils on free school meals used to have their eligibility protected for 6 years however, from September 2026, these protections for free school meals will end. Households must meet the FSM eligibility criteria from the start of the 2026 to 2027 academic year to continue receiving provision and eligibility will be checked annually by the local authority. If you are already registered for free school meals this will happen automatically.

We strongly encourage eligible families to register for Free School Meals as it can provide significant benefits for both families and schools. The link to apply for Free School Meals through Staffordshire County Council is: <https://apps2.staffordshire.gov.uk/web/fsmweb/>

If you need any support or have any questions or specific concerns, please do feel free to contact me at J.devereux@chaseterraceacademy.co.uk.

Yours faithfully



Miss J Devereux
Assistant Headteacher