

June 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

Important Changes to Free School Meals (from September 2026)

We are writing to inform you about **important national changes to Free School Meals (FSM)** which will come into effect from **September 2026**. These changes may affect whether your child is eligible now or in the future.

Providing healthy meals at school supports children's wellbeing, concentration, and readiness to learn. We therefore want to ensure that all families who are entitled to this support receive it.

What is changing?

From **September 2026**, eligibility for Free School Meals will widen, this means that **many more families will now qualify for free school meals**. There will now be two categories of Free School Meals.

Targeted FSM

- **This covers children who are in households receiving Universal Credit with annual household earnings under £7,400.**
- Children may also be eligible for Targeted Free School Meal's if their household is in receipt of other benefits, details of which can be found on the FSM section of the Wiltshire Council website.

Extended FSM

- **This covers children who are in households receiving Universal Credit with annual household regardless of income level.**

All parents in receipt of Universal Credit should have received an auto enrolment letter on 1st June, which means you will automatically be checked for eligibility.

End of Current Protection

- Currently, once a child becomes eligible for Free School Meals, they typically remain eligible even if household circumstances change. This is known as **Transitional Protection**. This protection will continue until the end of the 2025/26 academic year. From September 2026, eligibility will be based on your current financial circumstances and as a result, some students may gain or lose eligibility over time.
- As a result of this change, all families who are currently in receipt of Free School Meals at Noremarsch will have their eligibility checked automatically on an annual basis. You will be notified if there are any changes to your Free School Meal status following this check.

Should you not have received an auto enrolment letter and believe your child should be in receipt of Free School Meals, you are able to make an online application by visiting the Free School Meals section of the Wiltshire Council Website <https://parentportal.wiltshire.gov.uk/web/portal/pages/parents/free-school-meals> We can also provide you with a paper application form should you require one.

These national changes are designed to ensure that more families can access support, however we do appreciate the uncertainty they may bring. If you would like support with any of the information provided in this letter, or wish to discuss your circumstances confidentially, please contact the school office who will be able to point you in the right direction.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Hilary MacMeekin

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Headteacher