



Windsor Park CE Middle School

Springfield Road, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire, ST14 7JX

Executive Headteacher: Mrs A Grattage

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Website: www.windsorpark.staffs.sch.uk

11th September 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 has expanded 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.

Children being fostered are not normally eligible to claim free school meals as the fostering allowance paid is intended to cover the cost of the provision of meals for the child.

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

If you already have a free school meal at a Staffordshire school, you do not need to re-apply as the local authority will automatically check if your child is eligible as either a 'Targeted' or 'Expanded' free school meal.

If your child has changed schools in September (for example, from first to middle school), and they already get free school meals you do not need to apply again.

However, if you live outside Staffordshire and/or your child previously attended a school out of county, you will need to apply [Apply for Free School Meals - Staffordshire County Council](#).



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You will also need to apply if you believe you will become eligible under the new expansion.

Over the next couple of weeks, we will regularly be checking FSM eligibility with the Staffordshire Free School Meals Team and updating our records accordingly. If, by the 28th September, your child is not showing as being eligible and/or we have not received a screenshot from you to show confirmation acceptance of your application, your child will NOT receive a free school lunch.

For further information- [Free school meals: guidance for local authorities, local-authority-maintained schools, academies and free schools - GOV.UK](#)

Yours sincerely

Mrs T D Evans
Business Manager