



Dear Parents and Carers,

Ref: Important information about changes to Free School Meals eligibility from September 2026

As students return from the Summer break we would like to share some important information about changes to Free School Meals eligibility that comes into force from this month. Following changes announced by the Government, more families have become eligible for Free School Meals. We would encourage all parents and carers to read the information below carefully and consider whether they may now qualify.

What do you need to do?

If you believe your household may be eligible for Free School Meals, we strongly encourage you to submit an application as soon as possible and ideally before the end of this month. This will help ensure that any entitlement can be confirmed as close as possible to the start of the new academic year.

Please apply even if you have previously applied or if your circumstances have changed. You can apply here:

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/free-school-meals/apply-for-free-school-meals/>

What is changing?

Previously, eligibility for Free School Meals was linked to receipt of certain qualifying benefits and, for families receiving Universal Credit, a household income threshold.

From September 2026, all children living in households that receive Universal Credit will be entitled to Free School Meals, regardless of household earnings. This means that many more families will qualify for support from the start of the new academic year.

What are the new categories?

From September 2026, the Government will use two categories of Free School Meals:

Category	Eligibility	Outcome
Targeted FSM	Universal Credit and annual earnings of £7,400 or less	Free School Meals and Pupil Premium funding
Expanded FSM	Universal Credit and annual earnings above £7,400	Free School Meals

Whilst all eligible children will receive Free School Meals, only pupils in the Targeted FSM category will attract additional Pupil Premium funding for the school.

Why is it important to apply?

A successful application may provide benefits beyond free school meals.

Where pupils qualify for Pupil Premium funding, the school receives additional funding that helps us provide support and opportunities designed to improve educational outcomes.

At Farmor's School this currently includes:

- Additional support in core subjects
- Revision materials
- Literacy and reading support
- Access to pastoral guidance and mentoring
- Programmes, trips and visits designed to raise aspirations

Further information about how Pupil Premium funding is used will be published on our website.

Am I eligible if I claim other benefits?

Some families may continue to qualify for Free School Meals through other benefit routes and eligibility categories. If you are unsure whether your child may qualify, we encourage you to submit an application. The assessment process will determine whether entitlement applies.

Will my eligibility just transition over automatically?

No, not necessarily, the transitional protections that have enabled some pupils to remain eligible for Free School Meals despite changes in family circumstances were due to end at the end of the 2025–26 academic year. From this term, families will need to meet the relevant eligibility criteria in order to continue receiving Free School Meals. However, because eligibility is being significantly expanded to include all households receiving Universal Credit, we expect that many students who currently receive Free School Meals will continue to be eligible.

How can I find out more?

If you have any questions about Free School Meals eligibility or the application process, please contact Gloucestershire County Council or visit their Free School Meals information page. If you would like to discuss Pupil Premium support for your child at Farmor's School, please contact Noelle Sturla, Assistant Headteacher nsturla@farmors.gloucs.sch.uk, who leads our pastoral Pupil Premium provision.

Thank you for taking the time to review this information. We are keen to ensure that every family entitled to support receives it.

Yours sincerely



Mark Surowiec
Headteacher

