

Farmor's School – Free School Meals FAQs

Farmor's School uses a cashless catering which means we do not accept cash payments in school, all transactions are made via ParentPay which links to our catering system and student payment systems. We hope that the frequently asked questions below will answer any queries that you may have regarding Free School Meal allocations within the cashless catering system, but please do not hesitate to contact the finance team should you need further help or guidance.

My child is eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) – how does his work?

The FSM entitlement is driven by information held in our School Information Management System (SIMS). A FSM entitlement will give your child a daily spend allowance of £2.31. Any unspent money each day cannot be carried over to the next. If you think your child may be entitled to FSM you make an application via Gloucestershire County Council's website, via this link:

<http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/school-transport-and-free-school-meals/applyfor-free-school-meals/>

If you need help with this, please speak to the School Office, or the Finance Team.

If I want my child to be able to spend more than the Free School Meal Allowance of £2.31 some days how does this work?

If you want your child to be able to spend more than £2.31 on occasions you can top up their second 'purse' on the cashless system. Any items they buy each day will always be taken from the money in the FSM 'purse' first and any spend above this limit will be debited from purse 2 (where the money you have added is sat). Money in purse 2 stays on the system until the student needs to spend it.

What happens if my child tries to spend more than their FSM allowance of £2.31? Accounts are usually set with an overdraft limit of £2.20. This is meant for emergencies so that no child should come in to school and not be able to get something to eat. However, as your child is entitled to a FSM, an allowance is given for £2.31 each day. The overdraft will therefore not be available on the system unless you ask us to put it on for you. At first, it can be difficult for students who are entitled to a FSM to manage their allowance. If they are hungry at break and buy a roll or a drink for example, they will then not have enough money left for a full meal at lunchtime. It is important that you talk to your child about how you want to manage this, they can check their balance at any time and you may feel that you do not want them to spend any more than their allocated £2.31 each day. They will therefore need to understand that if they spend money during the day they keep their £2.31 limit in mind.

What happens if my child's FSM entitlement lapses?

The information relating to an entitlement to a FSM is fed into the catering system from our school management information system. When the school is notified of a start or end date to an entitlement, it is updated in the system. It is important therefore that you make sure you respond to any information you receive from Gloucestershire County Council about your entitlement coming to an end. If your entitlement comes to an end, you will need to put money on your account via ParentPay if you want your child to continue to buy food during the day.

How does my child access the FSM money on his/her account?

All students register in the same way. There is no distinction between students who are receiving a FSM and those who are not. Students have two options in order to be able to spend the money on their account. If you need any help setting up your ParentPay account, please contact the Finance Office on extn 116.