

Important Update: Changes to Free School Meals from September 2026

The department for Education has announced changes to how Free School Meals (FSM) will operate in England from the start of the 2026/27 school year. These changes are intended to simplify the system and extend support to more families.

Key changes from September 2026

- **Universal Credit becomes the main eligibility test:** All children in households receiving Universal Credit will qualify for Free School Meals, regardless of household income.
- **Removal of the income threshold:** The current £7400 annual income limit will no longer apply.
- **End of transitional protections:** The temporary protections the kept children eligible even if circumstances changed will end. Eligibility will be reassessed annually.

What this means for parents and carers:

- Children already receiving FSM: If your child is currently receiving Free School Meals, **YOU MUST** reapply **OR** this will stop in September 2026.
- **From September 2026:** Any child in a household receiving Universal Credit will qualify **BUT** you will still need to apply.
- **Annual checks:** Schools and local authorities will confirm eligibility once each year.

What parents need to do:

- Check whether your household receives Universal Credit, as this will determine eligibility from September 2026.
- If you think your child is eligible for Free School Meals it's imperative that you apply.

Please complete this online form - www.cloudforedu.org.uk

Alternatively, you can either download the application form from the South Tyneside Council website using the link, <https://www.southtyneside.gov.uk/article/2634/Free-school-meals> or collect a paper copy from the school's main reception.

Once completed, all application forms should be returned to Jarrow School for processing.

For questions about these changes, email devans@jarrowschool.com.

Yours sincerely,



Mr P Atkinson
Head Teacher