Isbourne Valley School
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Learning together inside and outside the classroom

15 July 2026

Free School Meals

Dear Parents and Carers,

The eligibility for free school meals (FSM) is changing and you may recall that I sent some information home recently. We feel very strongly as a school that all children who are entitled to a FSM should receive one. This is because:

- firstly, we want to make sure the children receive their entitlements;
- secondly, with the continuing additional pressures on household incomes we want to make sure we are highlighting support which could be available and useful to some of you; and
- thirdly, some entitlements to a FSM also provide additional funding to the school.

From September 2026 FSM eligibility will be split into two categories:

- **targeted** – for children in households receiving Universal Credit with annual earnings of £7,400 or less. These children will attract pupil premium and other disadvantage funding for their schools. Other education entitlements, such as the holiday activities and food programme (HAF) and the 'extended rights' element of school travel assistance, will be based on targeted free school meals.
- **Expanded** – for pupils in households receiving Universal Credit with annual earnings above £7,400. This provides FSM only.

Part of the additional funding with targeted FSMs is known as '**pupil premium**' funding. This extra money could make a real difference to the quality of education we are able to offer. We have previously used this money to pay for additional educational provision or resources, academic interventions, and wellbeing and self-esteem building activities and interventions (as a few examples). Please, please do apply for the free school meals if your child(ren) is(are) eligible.

Your child might be able to get **benefits based free school meals** if you get any of the following:

- Universal Credit (provided you have an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400 per year / £616 per month, as assessed by earnings from up to 3 of your most recent assessment periods)
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit

Children who get paid these benefits directly, instead of through a parent or guardian, can also get free school meals.

Please note - From the start of the 2026 to 2027 academic year, eligibility is being expanded to all children from households in receipt of Universal Credit regardless of household earnings. **Free school meals** are available to children in receipt of, or whose parents are in receipt of, one or more of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit
- support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

A child is only eligible to receive a free school meal where both:

- a claim for this support has been made
- their eligibility has been verified by the school where they are enrolled or by the local authority

Households may also be entitled to a meal if they:

- are in receipt of income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- receive the guarantee element of Pension Credit
- meet criteria set out in separate guidance for families with no recourse to public funds

Please do apply if you think your child may now be eligible for a FSM. You can find details of Gloucestershire County Council's system here. Please follow this link to apply.

Universal infant free school meals

Currently, pupils in reception, year 1 and year 2 are entitled to a free school meal because of a different government funding scheme known as 'universal infant free school meals' (UIFSM).

Please note: If your child is in reception, year 1 or year 2 and is eligible for free school meals according to the criteria above, you should still register for free school meals because we will then receive the extra pupil premium funding which your child is entitled to.

Yours faithfully

J R A Godding

Mr Godding
Headteacher