

Dear Parent/Carer,

Important Update - Free School Meal (FSM) Eligibility

We wanted to make contact to inform you about upcoming changes to Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility that will come into effect from September 2026.

Changes

The Government has confirmed that the rules for FSM eligibility will be updated from the start of the new academic year (September 2026).

Since 2018 FSM eligibility has had “Transitional Protection”, i.e. once you receive FSM funding, your child would continue to get that funding until they left school, regardless of change to the financial status of the parent/carer. The changes have made it clear that this protection will stop at the end of this academic year, and from September 2026 onwards FSM entitlement will be rechecked on a regular basis. However, the criteria for eligibility is also changing to make it broader and allow more families to access this funding support.

The Department for Education (DfE) has now released full national guidance explaining how these changes should be applied in schools.

From September 2026, FSM entitlement will consist of three types

- **Targeted FSM**
This is based on the current FSM threshold, covering pupils who are in households in receipt of Universal Credit with annual household earnings of £7,400 or less
- **Enhanced FSM**
This is a new category covering pupils who do not qualify for Targeted FSM, but who are in households receiving Universal Credit
- **Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM)**
Continuing for all pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2

What this means for you right now

If your child already receives Free School Meals, they will have their FSM eligibility re-checked at some point over the coming months. The Local Authority is advising that re-checks, or any new FSM applications should be submitted by schools from 1st June onwards. This allows checks and applications to be processed over the summer, ensuring everything is ready for the start of new school year.

Cambrian Learning Trust schools will need to **re-check** all FSM eligibility from 1st June onwards. For example, if your child is in year 6 this means that Secondary schools will have accurate information ready for September.

Those who receive **Targeted FSM** will get funding for school meals, but may also get additional support at Secondary School, which can include:

- Help with school uniform
- Support with school trips
- Access to enrichment activities and wider opportunities

Those who receive **Enhanced FSM** and **UIFSM** will get the school meal allowance only.

What this means for your child

If you do not currently receive FSM but you believe your circumstances may meet the criteria, we strongly encourage you to apply or reapply through your school. FSM can support your child's learning and wellbeing by helping them stay focused and ready to learn.

FSM eligibility will now be rechecked on an annual ongoing basis.

If you have any questions or need support with the application process, please contact the school office.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan Smart', written in a cursive style.

Jonathan Smart
Headteacher
King Alfred's Academy

