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Ref: FSMGG26-27

1<sup>st</sup> June 2025

### Free school meals eligibility – 2026-27

Dear Parent/Carer,

We are writing to let you know about some national changes to free school meals (FSM) following updated government guidance.

From September 2026, the rules around who is entitled to free school meals are changing. These changes mainly affect families who receive Universal Credit or whose circumstances have changed.

#### What is changing

- From the start of the 2026/27 academic year, **all children in households receiving Universal Credit will be entitled to free school meals**
- The current **£7,400 household income threshold for Universal Credit will be removed**
- **Transitional protections are ending** at the end of the 2025/26 school year

This means that from September, families must meet the updated eligibility rules to continue receiving free school meals. Some families who were previously eligible may no longer qualify, while others may now become eligible.

#### What you need to do

Free school meal applications are processed through your **local authority**, not the academy.

This means the academy cannot apply on your behalf or confirm eligibility; the local authority will carry out the check and confirm whether your child is entitled.

If you think your child may be eligible, you will need to:

- Apply (or reapply) through your local authority
- Complete the application form online (or request a paper form if needed)
- Provide key details such as your National Insurance number so eligibility can be checked
- Wait for confirmation from the local authority

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- Submit your application **before the summer holidays** so support is in place for September

You can apply here:

<https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/education/schools/your-child-at-school/meals/school-meals/free-school-meals.aspx> - Shirebrook Academy is a Derbyshire school and applications are made to the local authority where your child's school is located.

If your child already receives free school meals

If your child currently receives free school meals, **you may need to reapply to confirm your entitlement from September**, particularly if your circumstances have changed.

Important

- Children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 will **continue to receive universal free meals** (this is not changing)
- Applying is important even if your child already receives meals, as it helps schools receive additional funding to support pupils

If you need help or are unsure whether you are eligible, please contact [enquiries@shirebrookacademy.org](mailto:enquiries@shirebrookacademy.org) or the Local Authority.

We would appreciate if you could complete the online form - [Shirebrook Academy - Free School Meals eligibility 2026-27 – Fill in form](#). This will help us to estimate eligibility for 2026-27 and work with the Local Authority to support students and families that are eligible. The form will take no longer than a few minutes and can be completed using a mobile device.

If you have any questions regarding any aspects of this letter, please contact [enquiries@shirebrookacademy.org](mailto:enquiries@shirebrookacademy.org).

Thank you for working with us.

Yours sincerely,



**Mrs Lindsey Burgin**  
Principal

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