



18th June 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

We are writing to inform you about important updates to the Free School Meals (FSM) system that will take effect this September. Under new government guidance, eligibility is expanding to include every household in receipt of Universal Credit, completely removing the previous income cap. This means that if your family receives Universal Credit, your child will now qualify for a free school meal from September.

There will be two types of eligibility which are outlined in the table below:

| Eligibility Pathway | Household Criteria | Benefits for Your Child |
|----------------------|--|------------------------------|
| Targeted Eligibility | Earnings of £7,400 or less per year (excluding benefits). | • Receives Free School Meals |
| Expanded Eligibility | Earnings above £7,400 per year AND receiving Universal Credit. | • Receives Free School Meals |

There have also been some important changes to the transitional protection which previously allowed some children to keep them eligible for FSM even if they no longer met the requirements. At the end of July 2026, this protection ends and you must requalify under the new Universal Credit criteria above.

Before September, all children must be reassessed and their eligibility confirmed as either Targeted or Expanded, this means that even if your child currently receives Free School Meals, you must apply again and a separate application made for each of your children at this school.

Due to the changes and expansion of who is eligible for FSM, if you have previously not been eligible, it is worth applying again to see if they will be eligible from September 2026.

What you need to do

Please complete the application form for each child as soon as possible:

[2026-27 Free School Meals Application - Riddlesdown Collegiate – Fill in form](#)

All Applications must be made by Friday 10th July 2026 to ensure that support is in place for September.

Kind regards,

Fiona Langan
Assistant Principal