



ACE/RWI/SHN/RSA

9 June 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

**Subject: Important Update: Free School Meals – Changes from Autumn 2026**

We would like to inform you of important changes to Free School Meals (FSM) that will take effect from September 2026.

The current transitional protection for Free School Meals, which has been in place since April 2018, will end at the close of the summer term. This means that all families must reapply for Free School Meals for the next academic year, even if your child currently receives them.

**What this means for you**

- From now on, Free School Meals eligibility will be checked yearly.
- If your child currently receives Free School Meals, Staffordshire CC will automatically recheck eligibility for the 2026–27 school year.
- Please note, if you have a child transitioning to The Hart School from a primary school you will need to submit a new FSM application before they join us.
- If you think your child may be eligible but have not applied before, we strongly encourage you to do so.

**Important application dates**

- Applications can be made from 15 June and current guidance states applications must be made no later than 1 October 2026 (School Census Day).
- In future years, applications will need to be completed before the autumn school census each year.

**Changes to eligibility**

There will now be two types of Free School Meals:

- **Targeted FSM**  
For families receiving Universal Credit with a household income of £7,400 or less per year
- **Expanded FSM**  
For families receiving Universal Credit who do not meet the Targeted FSM income threshold



Please note only Targeted FSM will be used to determine additional school funding (Pupil Premium).

### **How to apply**

Applications are made through Staffordshire County Council:

[Free School Meals – Staffordshire County Council](#)

You will need:

- Your National Insurance number (or NASS number)
- Basic details about your child and household

If you cannot apply online, call 0300 111 8007 then select option 3 followed by option 2.

Frequently asked questions can be found here:

<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/financial-support-school/free-school-meals/frequently-asked-questions-free>

### **What you need to do now**

Please apply within the dates above if submitting an application. We recommend submitting your application before the summer break to help avoid any delays in September.

We understand that this is a change, and we appreciate your support during this transition. If you require any further guidance, please contact Staffordshire County Council using the number provided.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs A Cleary  
Assistant Principal