

NW/LR

July 2026

Dear Parents & Carers

The Government has announced that the eligibility criteria for Free School Meals will change from September 2026. This letter provides a summary of these changes. For more detailed information, please click the link below to view the Department for Education guidance:

[Department for Education Guidance - Free School Meals](#)

Checking eligibility for Free School Meals benefits both the child and their family, as well as the school. Some families may be entitled to Free School Meals, which could save parents more than £15 per week per child. For a family with two children at school, this could mean savings of over £1,000 per year.

From the start of the 2026 to 2027 academic year, all children from households in receipt of Universal Credit, regardless of household earnings, will be entitled to a free meal. Under these changes, there will be two categories of FSM eligibility:

Targeted FSM

- Children from households in receipt of Universal Credit with annual household earnings of **£7,400 or less**, will be eligible for targeted FSM. In addition to receiving free meals, pupils eligible for targeted FSM will attract pupil premium funding for their school.

Expanded FSM (From Sept)

- Children from households in receipt of Universal Credit, with annual household earnings **exceeding £7,400** will be entitled to expanded FSM (meals only).

You can use an online system that enables you to check your eligibility against the data held by the Department for Education's Eligibility Checking Services (ECS). As pupil's circumstances may change at any time, once you have entered your details, the system will regularly update, and we will have access to up-to-date information without needing to contact you. This includes annual rechecks. All you are required to do is follow the link below and enter details which include your name, date of birth and National Insurance Number.

The link below will take you to the free school meals web page on the DCC Website, this contains general information on free school meals and contains the apply for free school meals online link:

[Free school meals - Derby City Council](#)

The link below will take you directly to the "Apply for Free School Meals Online" form:

[Apply for Free School Meals - Before you begin - myAccount](#)

This information and more can be found on the link below:

[Free School Meals - Bemrose](#)

If you currently receive FSM, you do not need to reapply as we will be notified automatically of your eligibility. If an eligibility check indicates that you are no longer eligible, your FSM entitlement will finish at the end of this term. However, your child will remain part of our Pupil Premium cohort.

Pupil Premium is additional funding allocated to school for children from Reception age to Year 11 who are in care, adopted, have parents in the armed forces or have registered Free School Meals in the last six years (even if this was only for a very short period of time – perhaps when a parent was between jobs). As you can understand, this funding is extremely important and is used to benefit your child in many areas of school life.

Schools can choose how to spend their Pupil Premium. At The Bemrose School we recognise that no single intervention will provide a complete solution and we use the Pupil Premium to provide a multi-layered approach.

A pupil in the Pupil Premium cohort at The Bemrose School can expect to benefit from some of the following:

- *Academic and Pastoral support*
- *Help with uniform and essential equipment*
- *Access extra teaching assistants who work with classes*
- *Numeracy and Literacy Support*
- *One-to-one or small-group support within the classroom*
- *Enrichment activities and external workshops*
- *Support with mental health and wellbeing*
- *General curriculum support*
- *Academic Intervention sessions*
- *Reduced group sizes*
- *Resources to boost learning and engagement, such as iPads, laptops or tablets*

It is important to say Pupil Premium children in a class will get some benefit from how the school spends its Pupil Premium: for example, if the money is used to fund an additional teaching assistant, then others could also benefit, not just the pupils in the Pupil Premium cohort.

If you have any questions about the changes, please contact us.

Best regards,



Neil Wilkinson
Executive Headteacher

