Camp Primary and Nursery School St Albans
Bringing learning to life
Camp Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 5PG Tel: 01727 851056 Email: admin@camp.herts.sch.uk www.camp.herts.sch.uk

Friday 10th July 2026

Dear Parent or Carer,

We are writing to let you know about changes to free school meals (FSM) from the start of the 2026 to 2027 academic year.

What is changing?

Expanded entitlement for families on Universal Credit
From the start of academic year 2026 to 2027, all children in households receiving Universal Credit will be entitled to free school meals, regardless of earnings.

Going forward, there will be two types of eligibility:

- **Targeted FSM**: for households in receipt of universal credit earning £7,400 or less (includes free meals and additional support such as pupil premium). Other educational entitlements such as the Holiday Activities and Food program (HAF) and the 'extended rights' element of school travel assistance, will also continue to be based on targeted FSM.
- **Expanded FSM**: for households in receipt of universal credit earning above £7,400 (free meals only)

Families with no recourse to public funds may also be eligible for Targeted FSM subject to meeting separate criteria.

All pupils in reception, year 1 and year 2 will also continue to be entitled to free school meals under the universal infant free school meals policy regardless of family circumstances.

End of transitional protections
Since 2018, some children have continued to receive free school meals, even if their family circumstances changed during the rollout of Universal Credit. This is referred to as transitional protections.
Now that entitlement is being expanded to all families on Universal Credit, these protections will end at the end of the 2025-26 academic year.

This means:

- Some children may no longer be eligible from the start of the 2026 to 2027 academic year if their family does not receive Universal Credit or another qualifying benefit
- Eligibility will now be based on current benefit status

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What you need to do

If your child currently receives free school meals:

- We would advise you to reapply HERE: https://check-free-school-meals.education.gov.uk/
- In some cases, your child's school or the local authority may contact you to confirm your details
- If your child is starting a new school in September, they will be in touch to confirm whether you need to confirm your details or reapply.
- If you are unsure, please contact your school or local authority for advice.

If your child does not currently receive free school meals:

- You may now be eligible under the expanded criteria
- You will need to apply through your local authority / school, see the above link.

Not sure?

If you are unsure whether you need to apply or if your circumstances have changed, please contact:

- Your local authority, or
- Your child's school – please reach out to the school office and we will assist you.

Kind regards
School Office