



Lydgate Junior School

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Dear Parent/Carers

Free School Meal Eligibility is changing!

When will these changes take effect?

The new eligibility will take effect in September 2026. Families receiving Universal Credit will be able to access free school meals starting from the 2026/27 school year.

Who will benefit from the expanded free school meals?

Over half a million **additional** pupils will become eligible for Free School Meals under the new eligibility criteria. The change means that all households receiving Universal Credit, above the current £7,400 income cap, will qualify for this support.

What this means for you.

Families who are currently eligible do not need to reapply yet and will continue to receive meals until the end of August 2026.

We are still waiting for confirmation from the government and the local authority about how this new eligibility criteria will be managed in schools, however we expect that parents will be able to apply before the start of the school year 2026, by providing their National Insurance Number to check their eligibility. Further information will be shared with parents when this is available.

It's important to note that while eligibility will be automatically granted to all Universal Credit recipients, families will still need to actually apply to receive the benefit.

Many thanks

R Hurding

Mrs R Hurding
Headteacher

