



HOE VALLEY SCHOOL

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Head Teacher: Ms Lucy Owoh



10th June 2026

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Changes to Free School Meals (from September 2026)

We are writing to inform you about important national changes to Free School Meals (FSM) that will take effect from September 2026. These changes may affect your child's eligibility, either now or in the future.

What is changing?

From September 2026 all children in households receiving Universal Credit will be eligible for free school meals, regardless of income. This means many more families will be able to access free school meals.

End of current protections

At present, once a child qualifies for free school meals, they usually keep that entitlement even if family circumstances change, this is called Transitional Protection. This protection will continue until the end of the 2025/26 school year. From September 2026, eligibility will be based on your current circumstances. This means some children may gain or lose eligibility depending on changes to household income or benefits.

Important: You still need to apply!

Even if you receive Universal Credit free school meals are not automatically given. You must still apply through school. If you think your child may be eligible, we strongly encourage you to apply.

Why apply?

Registering for free school meals can:

- Provide free, nutritious lunches for your child.
- Help the school access additional funding to support pupils.
- Ensure you receive any related support you may be entitled to.

What should you do now?

- If your child already receives Free School Meals you need to reapply now in preparation for September 2026.
- If you receive Universal Credit you need to apply now.
- Eligibility checks will be completed termly using the information we already hold on file. If your circumstances change, please notify the school.



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Here is the link to the [Free School Meal application form](#) so you can apply electronically. Printed copies of the application forms with envelopes will also be available to collect from Reception, should you wish to complete by hand.

When you electronically complete the form and submit, it will be automatically sent to the school. All handwritten forms should either be emailed to FSM@hoevalleyschool.org or handed into Reception in the envelope provided.

These changes are designed to help more families access Free School Meals. We encourage all parents who may be eligible to apply and ensure they receive the support available. Please contact the school should you wish to discuss this confidentially.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Birch

Finance Manager

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