

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Free School Meals (FSM) - Key Changes from September 2026 - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

#### 1. Will all new FSM pupils attract Pupil Premium?

No. Only pupils meeting the lower-income (targeted FSM) threshold will continue to attract Pupil Premium funding. Expanded FSM pupils will receive meals but not necessarily funding.

#### 2. Do parents still need to apply?

Yes. FSM is not automatically applied, even if families receive Universal Credit. Schools should continue to actively promote registration.

#### 3. Can pupils lose FSM entitlement after September 2026?

Yes. Once transitional protection ends:-

- Eligibility will depend on current circumstances.
- Pupils may gain or lose entitlement.

Schools should plan for sensitive communication and support.

#### 4. How often should we check eligibility?

- At least termly (minimum).
- Preferably half-termly where possible.
- Always at key transition points and for new starters.

#### 5. Should FSM be removed mid-year?

Where possible, avoid abrupt removal. Guidance indicates eligibility should be reviewed periodically and managed carefully to prevent sudden loss during the school year.

#### 6. What is the expected impact on catering?

Schools should expect:-

- Increased take-up of meals.
- Pressure on capacity, staffing and service times.

Early engagement with catering providers is strongly recommended.

#### 7. How should we communicate this to parents?

Schools should:

- Provide clear, simple messaging ahead of September 2026.

- Explain:-
  - Who is eligible.
  - That applications are still required.
  - What may change for existing FSM pupils.