

# KINGSWOOD SECONDARY ACADEMY

## Changes to Free School Meals and Pupil Premium (PP)

for the 2026 to 2027 Academic Year

Important changes are coming to Free School Meals (FSM) and Pupil Premium from September 2026.



### EXTENDING ELIGIBILITY



From the start of the 2026 to 2027 academic year, **all children from households in receipt of Universal Credit** attending a local authority maintained school, academy or free school will be entitled to receive a **free meal**.



### OTHER ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Children may also be eligible if their household meets any of the following criteria:



- A parent receives support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The household is in receipt of income related Employment and Support Allowance
- The household receives the guarantee element of Pension Credit
- The household meets the criteria for families with no recourse to public funds



### TWO CATEGORIES OF BENEFITS-RELATED FREE SCHOOL MEALS



#### 1. TARGETED FSM

Based on the current threshold – for pupils in households receiving **Universal Credit** with annual household earnings of **£7,400 or less**.

- ✓ Free school meal daily during term time
- ✓ Access to the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Scheme
- ✓ Schools can claim additional funding (Pupil Premium) to support educational attainment



#### 2. EXPANDED FSM

A new category for pupils in households receiving **Universal Credit** who do not meet the targeted threshold.

- ✗ Free school meal daily during term time only
- ✗ NO additional support or funding can be claimed through the Pupil Premium element



### ENDING TRANSITIONAL PROTECTIONS



Transitional protections for free school meals have been in effect since 1 April 2018. This has meant that pupils becoming eligible for free meals under the benefits-based criteria have retained their entitlement, even if their household circumstances have changed.



Transitional protections apply until the end of the 2025 to 2026 academic year (31<sup>st</sup> July 2026).



From the start of the 2026 to 2027 academic year, transitional protections for free school meals will end.



Households **must** meet the **new FSM eligibility criteria** from the start of the 2026 to 2027 academic year to continue receiving their FSM provision.



### TO SUMMARISE



Free school meal eligibility is being extended to all families receiving **Universal Credit**, which may result in some families becoming eligible for the first time.



Eligibility is checked on an annual basis, which may result in some families currently receiving free school meals no longer being eligible next year.



All families will need to check their eligibility from **1st July 2026** to access Free School Meals for their children from September 2026.



The changes do **not** affect the Universal Infant Free School Meal Scheme, so children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 will continue to receive free meals as usual.



Low-income families can still apply for additional support through **Key Stage 1 Pupil Premium**.



### HOW TO APPLY FOR FREE SCHOOL MEALS FOR 2026/27



**Applications cannot be made until 1st July 2026.** The application platform within the parent portal has been suspended to allow the system changes and testing to take place.



Once everything is running as it should, the platform can be accessed as normal via <https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/parent-portal>



We estimate this will take a few weeks and do ask for your patience please.



We recommend **applying in July** once the system is live, if possible, as this will give more time for applications to be processed.



Thank you for your support in ensuring every child gets the best start.