

3rd September 2026

Dear Parent/Carer,

RE: Changes to Free School Meals

At Stamford Welland Academy, we are committed to ensuring that all eligible students receive the support available to them. We are writing to let you know about important changes to Free School Meals (FSM) eligibility that will take effect from September 2026.

The Government has expanded eligibility for Free School Meals so that all children living in households receiving Universal Credit are now entitled to a free school meal, regardless of household earnings. From September 2026, eligible pupils will be recorded under one of two categories:

- **Targeted FSM:**
For pupils whose household receives Universal Credit and has annual earnings of £7,400 or less. Pupils in this category will:
 - Receive free school meals
 - Generate additional Pupil Premium funding for the school
- **Expanded FSM:**
For pupils whose household receives Universal Credit but has earnings above £7,400 per year. Pupils in this category will:
 - Receive free school meals
 - Not attract Pupil Premium funding through FSM eligibility alone

What this means for families:

Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) is reviewing existing Free School Meal registrations to determine eligibility under the new arrangements.

If your child currently receives Free School Meals, their entitlement may be re-checked. Where LCC does not hold sufficient information, you may be contacted and asked to provide updated details. If you have previously applied and LCC holds your email address, you should receive notification of your child's eligibility status once the review has been completed.

It is important to note that the transitional protections that have been in place since April 2018 have now ended. This means that pupils must meet the current eligibility criteria to continue receiving free school meals.

Why applying matters:

In addition to supporting families with the cost of school meals, FSM registration can help the school identify students who may be eligible for additional support. Students eligible for Targeted Free School Meals help generate Pupil Premium funding, which the school uses to provide additional educational support and opportunities.

Action Required:

If you have already applied for FSM:

- If you have previously applied for Free School Meals through Lincolnshire County Council and your details remain unchanged, you do not need to take any action at this stage.

If you have never applied for FSM:

- Even if you believe your child may already qualify, we strongly encourage you to make an application if your household receives Universal Credit.
- Applications can be made online via Lincolnshire County Council:
<https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/school-pupil-support/apply-free-school-meals>
- Registering your child ensures they receive any entitlement available to them and enables the correct level of funding and support to be allocated.

If you think your child may be eligible, we encourage you to apply as soon as possible.

Kind regards,

Hayley Twigger
Assistant Principal