



## Ecclesfield Primary School

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Executive Head: L Chadwick

4th June 2026

### Changes to Free School Meal Eligibility

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are writing to let you know about some upcoming changes to Free School Meals (FSM) that may affect your child from 1 September 2026.

On 11 May, the Department for Education announced changes to how FSM eligibility will work in the future, linked to Universal Credit. These changes will affect both families who currently receive FSM and those who may be eligible but are not yet claiming.

Since April 2018, any child who became eligible for FSM has continued to be eligible, even **if their family's circumstances later changed**. This protection will come to an end at the end of the 2025–26 school year – on 31 August 2026.

Because of this, all FSM eligibility will need to be checked again between the summer and autumn term by Sheffield City Council. This applies to:

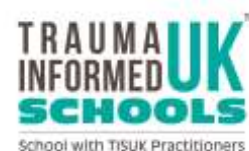
- pupils who currently receive FSM, and
- families who would like to apply for FSM for the first time.

This will then become an annual process, with regular eligibility checks.

We encourage you to have a look at the new criteria below to see if your family may be eligible.

#### Targeted FSM (with additional Pupil Premium funding for schools):

- If you receive Universal Credit and your household income is £7,400 a year or less.
- If you receive support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
- If you receive Income-related Employment and Support Allowance or the guaranteed element of Pension Credit.
- If your family has no recourse to public funds (NRPF).



### Expanded FSM (free school meals only):

- If you receive Universal Credit and your household income is above £7,400.

All current FSM arrangements will remain in place until 31 August 2026.

### Next Steps

If you are not already receiving FSM but think you might be eligible, you can apply online for free school meals at <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/schools-childcare/school/school-meals>. We will also be sending a paper form home with each child if you would prefer to complete it and return it to school. We will then process the application on your behalf.

Please note you do not need to apply if you are already receiving income-based free school meals. Sheffield City Council will be in touch if anything has changed.

Our priority is to make sure that every child who is entitled to free school meals continues to receive them, so please look out for further updates.

Kind regards

Phillippa Robinson  
Head of School

