Dear parent/guardian

Subject: Changes to free school meals from the 2026 to 2027 academic year

We are writing to let you know about a change affecting your child's free school meals entitlement.

This follows updates to the national free school meals rules set by the Department for Education.

Since 2018, some children have continued receiving free school meals even when their family's circumstances have changed and no longer met the standard eligibility rules. This temporary protection was introduced to provide stability during wider changes to the benefits system.

The temporary protection ended nationally at the end of the 2025/26 school year.

Going forward, eligibility for free school meals will instead be based on a household's current circumstances.

What this means for your child

Our records indicate that your household does not currently meet the eligibility criteria for free school meals. As a result, your child will no longer receive free school meals.

We understand that this may be disappointing news, particularly if your child has received free school meals for some time. However, under the new arrangements, eligibility is assessed based on a household's current circumstances, and whether you are receiving Universal Credit.

What should you do next?

If you are receiving Universal Credit, or think your circumstances may have changed, please contact us so that we can review your entitlement.

We know that circumstances can change over time. If your household starts receiving Universal Credit in the future, you can reapply through our online parent portal at: https://schoolsparentportal.cheshireeast.gov.uk/web/portal/pages/home.

If you have any questions this change or your child's eligibility for free school meals, please contact freeschoolmeals@cheshireeast.gov.uk.