

Joanne Davidson
Head of County Catering Services

Children's Services
County Hall
Matlock
Derbyshire
DE4 3AG

Telephone 01629 536481
Email checking@derbyshire.gov.uk
Ask for FSM Checking Team
Date 22 June 2026

Private and Confidential

To all Parent/Carers who have had
Free School Meal Protection

Dear Parent/Carers

The End of Free School Meals Protection from September 2026

We are getting in touch to let you know about changes from September 2026 for any family who was previously benefited from 'No Longer Eligible - Protected Free School Meals' (FSM) . Protection of FSM was put in place whilst the government was rolling out Universal Credit (UC) and has been in place since 2018. Any student who has been found eligible at any point after 01.04.18, even if not currently eligible, has been able to access FSM. Now UC has been fully rolled out the protection for FSM will cease at the end of July 2026.

However, we are also able to confirm that all families that are in receipt of Universal Credit remain or become eligible for Free School Meals (FSM).

It is not too early to ensure we have your family's details to check now. Once we have your family's details on our system will we check them every month and if your family does become eligible the school will be notified by an online report that they can access securely at any time.

It is quick and easy to register – and once the details have been submitted and confirmed correct, they will remain in place for the entire journey through school for your child(ren). We just need to be notified if the parent surname changes, if there are additional siblings to add to the record or the child(ren) become resident with a different parent or carer.

If your details are found eligible your family will be immediately entitled to a free meal and this will also continue throughout the next school year also – so if we find or confirm your child is eligible now, they will remain eligible until the end of July 2027.

To ensure our service is inclusive, can help the maximum number of families and capture the most money from the Department for Education in Pupil Premium please register your family with the Team. Even if they prefer a packed lunch or you are sure you will not be eligible. It is quick and easy to do. You can apply/register online by visiting www.derbyshire.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals or email or telephone us details in letterhead above.

Yours sincerely



Sue Upton
Business Services Officer - Catering Service