

Dear Parents and Carers,

At St. John's we are committed to ensuring that every child and family receives the support available to them. We encourage all parents and carers to review the information below and check whether they may be eligible for Free School Meals. Registering not only provides valuable support for families but can also help the school access additional funding that benefits pupils across our school community.

### **What Is Changing?**

From September 2026, the Government is expanding eligibility for Free School Meals in England. All children in households receiving Universal Credit will become eligible for Free School Meals, regardless of household earnings.

This change is expected to make hundreds of thousands of additional children eligible for support and ensure that more families can access the assistance available to them.

### **Why Register?**

Registering for Free School Meals can provide significant benefits for both families and schools.

In addition to receiving a free school meal each day, eligibility may help schools access additional funding through the Pupil Premium. This funding supports schools in providing enhanced educational opportunities, pastoral support, enrichment activities and targeted interventions to help children achieve their full potential.

In some areas, eligibility for Free School Meals may also help families access additional support, including: -

- Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programmes
- School uniform grants
- Educational support services
- Other local authority-funded assistance schemes

### **What Do I Need to Do?**

If your child already receives benefit-related Free School Meals, you do **not** need to make a new application.

If you think your child may be eligible, please visit the link below for the application details:

[Applying for free school meals | Free school meals | Staffordshire County Council](#)

Applications are usually straightforward and may require details such as your National Insurance number and information about any qualifying benefits you receive.

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### **Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 Pupils**

Children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 continue to receive meals through the Universal Infant Free School Meals scheme.

However, families who receive qualifying benefits are still encouraged to register for Free School Meals, as this may enable the school to receive additional Pupil Premium funding to support pupils' learning and development.

### **Transitional Arrangements**

Current transitional protections for Free School Meals are due to end before the new eligibility arrangements begin in September 2026.

Families are encouraged to ensure that their details are up to date and to check their eligibility so that support can continue where applicable.

### **Need Further Information?**

Further information about Free School Meals can be found on the Government website:

### **Apply for Free School Meals – GOV.UK**

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>

Thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards,

Mrs Stone

Head Teacher

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