

15th June 2026

Dear Families,

Important Information about Free School Meals – Action Needed This Term

We would like to make you aware of important national changes to Free School Meals (FSM) which will come into effect from **September 2026**. Please see the attached letter from Bromley Council for full details.

What's changing?:

From September, **all families receiving Universal Credit will qualify for Free School Meals**, but there will be two categories of eligibility. Bromley explain that:

- Some pupils will qualify for FSM **and** attract **Pupil Premium funding** for their school (Targeted Eligibility)
- Some pupils will qualify for FSM **only** (Expanded Eligibility)

These changes mean that **more pupils will now be eligible**, which may also help Riverside receive additional Pupil Premium funding to support learning.

All families must reapply:

Bromley have confirmed that **every child must be assessed under the new criteria before the start of the new academic year**.

This means that **all pupils currently receiving Free School Meals must reapply this term** to continue receiving FSM from September 2026.

What you need to do:

If you think your child may be eligible, please complete the short online application form for your child's site **before Friday 17th July 2026**. Bromley guarantee that forms submitted by this date will be processed in time for September.

Application links:

- **West Wickham** – [Click to fill in form](#)
- **Phoenix** – [Click to fill in form](#)
- **Beckenham** – [Click to fill in form](#)
- **St Paul's Cray (Orpington)** – [Click to fill in form](#)

We have listed some Questions and Answers at the bottom of this letter but if you have any questions about your application, please contact the Free School Meal team at Bromley: fsm@bromley.gov.uk

A note for Primary families:

All primary-aged pupils currently receive free meals through either the **Universal Infant Free School Meals scheme (Reception–Year 2)** or the **Mayor of London scheme (Years 3–6)**. This means some families who are eligible for means-tested FSM may not have applied before.

We strongly encourage eligible families to apply now. This will help ensure your child's entitlement is in place for their **transition to Year 7**, and will also allow the school to receive **additional Pupil Premium funding**.

Thank you for your support.

Riverside Finance Team.

Free School Meals – Q&As

Q: What is changing? A: From September 2026, all families who get Universal Credit can get Free School Meals. But there are two types of eligibility.

Q: Do I need to apply again? A: Yes. *All* families who currently get Free School Meals must apply again this term.

Q: Why do I need to apply again? A: Bromley Council must check every child under the new national rules before September.

Q: What happens if I don't apply? A: Your child may not get Free School Meals in September until your application is processed.

Q: My child already gets a free meal in primary school. Do I still need to apply? A: Yes, if you think you are eligible for means-tested Free School Meals. This helps with Year 7 transition and may give the school extra funding.

Q: What is Pupil Premium? A: Extra money the school receives to support your child's learning. Some families will qualify for this.

Q: How do I apply? A: Use the online form for your child's Riverside site. Please apply before **17th July 2026**.

Q: Who can help me? A: You can contact the Free School Meal team at Bromley fsm@bromley.gov.uk



Admissions and Transport – Free School Meals Children, Education and Families

Bromley Civic Centre, Churchill Court, 2 Westmoreland Road,
Bromley, BR1 1AS

Telephone: 020 - 8464 3333

Internet: www.bromley.gov.uk/FreeSchoolMeals

1 June 2026

Free School Meals are changing from September 2026

Dear Parent/Carer,

We would like to inform you about important changes to Free School Meals (FSM) eligibility, which will take effect from September 2026.

What's changing?

Under new national rules, all families receiving Universal Credit will qualify for Free School Meals. This means more children will become eligible.

From 1 September 2026, there will be two categories of FSM eligibility:

1. Targeted Eligibility

- Applies to children in households receiving Universal Credit with annual earnings of **£7,400 or less**.
- Pupils in this category will:
 - Qualify for Free School Meals
 - Enable schools to receive additional Pupil Premium funding
 - Be considered for other support, such as extended school travel assistance

2. Expanded Eligibility

- Applies to children in households receiving Universal Credit with annual earnings **above £7,400**.
- Pupils in this category will:
 - Qualify for Free School Meals only
 - Not attract Pupil Premium funding

Important information

- Any existing transitional protection for Free School Meals will end in July 2026.
- The Department for Education (DfE) have advised that all children must be assessed under the new criteria before the start of the new academic year.

What you need to do

To make sure your child's eligibility is assessed in time, we strongly encourage you to complete and submit a short application form, using the link provided by your child's school, for each child as soon as possible

The Council will use this information to assess eligibility and share the outcome with you and your child's school.

Key deadline

- **Forms submitted by 17 July 2026** are guaranteed to be processed before the new school year
- Applications received after this date will still be assessed, but outcomes may not be available before September

Thank you for your cooperation in helping ensure all children who are entitled to Free School Meals receive them.

If you have any questions, please contact: fsm@bromley.gov.uk

Yours faithfully

Admissions and Transport – Free School Meals
London Borough of Bromley