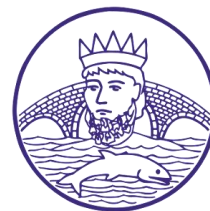


King Athelstan Primary School

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Headteacher: Emily Newton

13th July 2026

Dear Families

Changes to free school meals from September 2026

We are writing to let you know about changes to benefits related free school meals (FSM) from the start of the 2026 to 2027 academic year.

What is changing?

Expanded entitlement for families on Universal Credit

From September 2026, all children in households receiving Universal Credit will be entitled to free school meals, regardless of earnings.

Going forward, there will be two types of eligibility:

- **Targeted FSM:** for households in receipt of universal credit earning £7,400 or less (includes free meals and additional support such as pupil premium).
Other educational entitlements such as the Holiday Activities and Food program (HAF) and the 'extended rights' element of school travel assistance, will also continue to be based on targeted FSM.
- **Expanded FSM:** for households in receipt of universal credit earning above £7,400 (free meals only)

Families with no recourse to public funds may also be eligible for Targeted FSM subject to meeting separate criteria.

All pupils in the school will also continue to be entitled to free school meals under the universal infant free school meals policy and the London Mayor scheme regardless of family circumstances. The funding streams for the school will change.

End of transitional protections

Since 2018, some children have continued to receive free school meals, even if their family circumstances changed during the rollout of Universal Credit. This is referred to as transitional protections.

Now that entitlement is being expanded to all families on Universal Credit, these protections will end in September 2026

This means:

- Some children may **no longer be eligible** from the start of the 2026 to 2027 academic year if their family does not receive Universal Credit or another qualifying benefit
- Eligibility will now be based on current benefit status



What you need to do

Please ensure that the school has your Date of Birth and NI number (held securely), so that we can ensure current eligibility can be checked.

If your child currently receives free school meals:

- In most cases, you do not need to reapply
- Your child's school or the local authority will check your eligibility automatically using the details already held and inform you of any changes to your FSM eligibility
- In some cases, your child's school or the local authority may contact you to confirm your details
- If your child is starting a new school in September, they will be in touch to confirm whether you need to confirm your details or reapply
- If you are unsure, please contact your school or local authority for advice

If your child does not currently receive free school meals

- You may now be eligible under the expanded criteria, if you receive Universal Credit
- You will need to apply through your local authority. <https://www.kingston.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/free-school-meals>

Not sure?

If you are unsure whether you need to apply or if your circumstances have changed, please contact the school office by email with:

- Your name
- Your email address
- Your date of birth (DOB)
- Your NI Number or NASS number

If we hold your DOB and NI number you will be included in a bulk check of FSM eligibility. If you wish to opt out please email the school office by the end of term.

If you have any questions please contact the school office.

Kind regards



Sarah Kearns

School Business Manager