

# Cherry Tree Primary School and Nursery

*Caring, Thriving, Preparing, Succeeding*

Head of School: Mr M Davie

Executive Headteacher: Mrs K Hamilton

24<sup>th</sup> March 2026

## Subject: Important Changes to Free School Meal Eligibility from September 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

We are writing to inform you of important changes to the Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility criteria, which will take effect from the start of the 2026/27 academic year (September 2026).

### What is changing?

The Government has announced an expansion of the FSM programme. From September 2026, **all children in households receiving Universal Credit** will be entitled to free school meals. This removes the current requirement for household income to be below £7,400 per year.

### What this means for you:

- If you are receiving Universal Credit, your child may become eligible for free school meals from September 2026, even if you were not previously eligible.
- **Transitional Protections Ending:** The previous "transitional protections" (which allowed pupils to keep meals even if their income rose) will end with this change.
- **Action Required:** While the expansion is automatic, we encourage all parents to ensure their details are updated with the school to ensure a smooth transition.

If you believe that you may be entitled under the new rulings, please contact the school office.

For now, no immediate action is needed, but we wanted to inform you of this upcoming change to support your family.

Yours sincerely,

M Davie

Mr. M Davie

Head of School

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