



Eastlands Primary School

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Mrs Warrington
Headteacher

Dear Parents and Carers,

Changes to Free School Meal Eligibility

The Government has announced changes to the eligibility criteria for Free School Meals (FSM), which means that more families may become entitled to receive free school meals for their children from September 2026. We would like to make families aware of these changes and explain what Warwickshire County Council is doing to support the process.

What Warwickshire County Council is doing

Warwickshire County Council will automatically re-check the eligibility of all children who are currently registered for Free School Meals, from nursery age through to Year 11. The checking process is due to begin during the week commencing 20 July 2026 and Warwickshire aims to complete these checks by the beginning of August. Families whose children are already receiving Free School Meals do not need to do anything at this stage. Warwickshire County Council will contact parents directly if they require any further information or to confirm the outcome of the check.

Who may now be eligible?

The Department for Education has widened eligibility so that more families receiving certain benefits will qualify for Free School Meals.

If you believe your family circumstances may mean that your child is now eligible, even if they have never received Free School Meals before, we encourage you to apply.

Registering for Free School Meals can provide:

- Free school lunches for eligible pupils.
- Additional funding for the school through the Pupil Premium, which helps us provide extra support, resources and opportunities for children.
- Access to other support and benefits that may be linked to Free School Meal eligibility.

What do parents need to do?

If your child already receives Free School Meals:

- You do not need to make a new application.
- Warwickshire County Council will carry out an automatic eligibility check and contact you if necessary.

If your child has never received Free School Meals but you think they may now be eligible:



- Applications can be made directly to Warwickshire County Council from the beginning of August 2026.
- Applications should be submitted online via the Warwickshire County Council Free School Meals service.

How to apply

From August, parents and carers can apply online using the Warwickshire County Council website:

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals>

If you are unsure whether you qualify, we would encourage you to apply. Warwickshire County Council will assess your eligibility and inform you of the outcome.

Further information and support

Warwickshire County Council has published further information for families and has updated its website to reflect the new arrangements.

Parents can also access updates through the Family Information Service Newsletter:

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/fis>

If you have any questions about eligibility or the application process, please contact Warwickshire County Council directly:

- Telephone: 01926 742274 or 01926 742543
- Email: freemeals@warwickshire.gov.uk

We know that many families are facing rising living costs and would strongly encourage anyone who thinks they may be eligible to check and apply. Even if your child is entitled to Universal Infant Free School Meals in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2, registering for Free School Meals can provide valuable additional funding to support your child's education.

Yours sincerely,

Samantha Warrington
Headteacher

