



Bishop Young CofE Academy

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Principal: Ms Rachael Lacey-Cole

1st July 2026

Dear Parent/Carer,

We are writing to inform you about important changes to Free School Meal eligibility and encourage you to provide your details so we can check if you are eligible. The Department for Education has announced changes to Free School Meals from September 2026, which will mean that many more families will qualify for this support.

Free School Meals provide vital nutrition for children during the school day and play an important role in supporting health, wellbeing and learning.

Who will benefit from the expanded Free School Meals?

From September 2026, eligibility will be expanded so that all households receiving Universal Credit will qualify for Free School Meals. This change removes the current £7,400 income cap and is expected to benefit over half a million additional pupils nationwide.

What do parents need to do?

Although eligibility will automatically be available to all families receiving Universal Credit, parents and carers will still need to apply. If you currently receive free school meals, you will need to reapply.

We are working with Leeds City Council to check eligibility. Parents are asked to provide details to us via the form linked below by Friday 10th July.

[Bishop Young Academy Free School Meal Eligibility Check](#)

Providing information will act as consent for these details to be passed to the Welfare and Benefits Service. They will then be able to check eligibility, and if confirmed, put your child's free school meal in place for September 2026. Full details of how we process personal data can be found in [our privacy notices](#).

When will these changes take effect?

The new eligibility criteria will apply from September 2026, meaning families receiving Universal Credit will be able to access Free School Meals from the 2026/27 school year.



**How will this help families financially?**

This expansion will offer significant financial support. Eligible families could save up to £495 per year per child on school lunches. For families with multiple children, this could make a considerable difference to household budgets.

How will children benefit?

In addition to the financial benefits, Free School Meals help ensure children receive nutritious meals during the school day, supporting concentration and learning in the classroom, physical health and development, and overall wellbeing. The government is also reviewing and updating the School Food Standards to ensure schools are supported with the latest nutrition guidance.

If you require further advice or information, please contact the school office.

Ms R Lacey-Cole
Principal

Link to form: <https://forms.office.com/e/DK5c4DPQP8>

