Wroxall Primary School

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Dear Families

Re Changes to Free School Meal Eligibility from September 2026

Free School Meals eligibility is changing from the start of the new academic year.

From September 2026, the Government is expanding access to Free School Meals so that **all children and young people from households receiving Universal Credit can apply, regardless of income.** There will be 2 categories of eligibility:

- **Eligible Targeted**: this covers children in households receiving Universal Credit with annual household earnings of £7,400 or less, as well as those receiving certain other qualifying benefits or with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF). These children may also attract additional support for their school, such as pupil premium funding, and access to schemes such as the Holiday Activities and Food programme.

- **Eligible Expanded**: this covers children in households receiving Universal Credit with annual household earnings exceeding £7,400 per year. These children will be entitled to Free School Meals only.

Children already receiving free school meals have continued to receive funding under transitional protection, regardless of whether their financial circumstances changed. This transitional protection ends on 31st July 2026. The Local Authority will automatically carry out checks for existing free school meal families to check for continued entitlement. **This means there is no need to re-apply if you are already in receipt of free school meals**. However, if your circumstances have changed, your eligibility could end.

Applications for both targeted and expanded free school meals are now open on the Isle of Wight Council portal which can be accessed here:
https://emsonline.iow.gov.uk/CitizenPortal_LIVE/en

Upon application, you will receive an immediate response. However, the Local Authority will need to complete follow up checks to establish if this is *expanded* or *targeted* and so it may take slightly longer for them to confirm this information to us.

Although you can apply now, eligibility for Expanded Free School Meals will not start until September 2026.

We would strongly encourage any families who feel they could be eligible for either type of free school meal criteria to please apply, even if your child is unlikely to take up school dinners, as this helps to bring additional funding into school.

Please note, this is a separate scheme to Universal Infant Free School Meals which is automatically available to all children from Reception to Year 2. However, it is still worthwhile for families in those year groups to make this claim if you feel you may be eligible.

I hope the above clarifies the changes but if you have any queries, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely

Tara Hopkinson

Headteacher