

Danny Hall
Service Delivery Lead (Education)
Loxley House
Station Street
Nottingham
NG2 3NG

19th June 2026

Dear Parent/Carer,

We are writing to inform you about some upcoming national changes to Free School Meals (FSM) and, most importantly, to explain what this means for you and your child.

You do not need to do anything. If your child currently has a city school place, you do not need to re-apply for Free School Meals.

You may have received or seen communications asking you to re-apply for Free School Meals. For children in Nottingham city schools, that does not apply to you.

Why are you getting this letter?

The Government is updating how Free School Meals eligibility is checked across the country. The main changes are:

- From September 2026, any family receiving Universal Credit can receive Free School Meals, regardless of income.
- Eligibility will be checked more regularly using a more automated system, managed by the Department for Education (DfE checker).
- Nottingham City Council is implementing a new auto-enrolment approach. This approach will help ensure that any child who is entitled to Free School Meals is identified as quickly as possible. You can read more about this process on our website.
- At the beginning of each academic year, our checks may show that your child can no longer get free meals. This is because you no longer receive Universal Credit, or any other benefit that qualifies. If you start to receive these benefits again, you can re-apply for Free School Meals at any time, and our regular checks will also pick up your change in status.

What we are doing for you

We are introducing an improved Free School Meals service for our schools, so that the process is simpler for families. As part of this:

- We will securely collect and review existing Free School Meals data
- We will use an automatic eligibility checking system to reassess those already receiving a free school meal
- We will identify any children who are newly eligible without families needing to apply

If your child is newly entitled, we will write to you about our auto-enrolment approach, and you will be able to opt-out if you do not wish your child to receive a free school meal.

Do I need to do anything?

No action is needed right now.

Please get in touch with the Pupil Benefits team if, at any time:

- Your circumstances change and you begin to receive Universal Credit, or
- You believe your child may be eligible, but is not currently receiving Free School Meals

If we ever need anything from you directly, we will contact you and explain exactly what to do.

What happens next?

We will be sharing further information before the end of this academic year, including more detail about how the new system works and any future steps. There is nothing you need to do in the meantime.

Need help?

If you have any questions, please contact our Pupil Benefits team:

✉ pupil.benefits@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

☎ 0115 841 5568

We appreciate that changes like this can be confusing. Please be assured that we are working to make the system simpler, more efficient, and to ensure that every child receives the support they are entitled to.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,



Danny Hall

Service Delivery Lead (Education)
Nottingham City Council