

# Padnell Infant School

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16<sup>th</sup> June 2026

Dear Parents & Carers,

## **Free School Meal Eligibility Checker – Action required**

The eligibility for benefits based Free School Meals (not Universal School Meals) is changing. All households receiving Universal Credit will be included, but eligibility will be divided into two groups:

- **Targeted Free School Meals**  
For households receiving Universal Credit with an annual income below £7400
- **Expanded Free School Meals**  
For households receiving Universal Credit with an annual income above £7400

### **What you Need to Do**

- If your child already received Free School Meals (FSM) and you have applied through the Hampshire Portal, you do not need to do anything
- If you think your child may now be eligible, please submit an application through the Hampshire Portal: [Free school meals for pupils up to 16 years old | Education and learning | Hampshire County Council](#)
- Please note: children eligible under the **expanded criteria** will only begin to receive FSM from September 2026

### **Important**

All children at our school already receive free meals under the Universal Infant Free Meals scheme. However, we still encourage you to apply.

This is because schools receive **Pupil Premium Funding** for children who qualify under **Targeted Free School Meal eligibility**. This funding helps support your child during their time at school.

### **Transitional Protections (until August 2026)**

Transitional protections have been in place since 1 April 2018 and will continue until the end of the school year (to July 2026).

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**R**esilient learner  
**O**riginal thinker  
**W**ise worker



During this time:

- Any child who becomes eligible for benefits based Free School Meals will continue to receive them until July 2026
- This will not change even if household income increases.

From **September 2026**, these protections will end. From this point, all families must meet the new eligibility rules for their child to receive Free School Meals.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs Mandy Grayson  
Headteacher

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