

Mount St. Joseph

"A community of Learners, Believers and Friends"

Greenland Road • Farnworth
Bolton • BL4 0HT
Tel: 01204 391800
Fax: 01204 389575

Website: www.msj.stoccat.org.uk
e-mail: reception@msj.stoccat.org.uk

Headteacher: Mrs A Devany



2nd July 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

Important Changes to Free School Meals (FSM) from September 2026

We are writing to let you know about changes being introduced from September 2026 that may affect a child's entitlement to free school meals.

What is changing?

From September 2026, all children in households receiving Universal Credit will be entitled to Free School Meals. There will be two types of FSM:

- **Targeted FSM** - for families receiving Universal Credit with household earnings of £7,400 or less per year. This also provides schools with additional funding and access to some other support programmes.
- **Expanded FSM** - for families receiving Universal Credit with earnings above £7,400 per year. Children will receive free meals in school.

Ending Transitional Protections - Since 2018, some families have continued to receive FSM even if their circumstances changed. This is known as "transitional protection". These protections will end from September 2026. This means:

- Some families currently receiving FSM may no longer qualify
- All families will need to meet the new eligibility criteria
- Eligibility will be checked annually

We therefore encourage all parents/carers, including those currently receiving FSM, to **check your eligibility as soon as possible**.

Who should complete the check?

Please complete the check if any of the below apply to you:

- Your household receives Universal Credit or other benefits
- Are in receipt of income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Receive the guarantee element of Pension Credit
- Your child currently receives free school meals
- Your child brings a packed lunch



- You are unsure if your child will qualify from September 2026
- Your circumstances have recently changed

Why does this matter?

If your child is eligible:

- They can receive a free school meal each day from September 2026
- The school may receive extra funding to provide additional support, resources, and opportunities for students (even if your child brings a packed lunch)

What should parents/carers do now?

Please use the LGfL Free School Meals Eligibility Checker link below to complete the check. You will need your National Insurance number/NASS Number

[Check | LGfL FSM](#)

The checker is quick, secure, and easy to use. You do not need to work out whether your child qualifies – the system will check this for you and confirm the result straight away.

What happens next?

- If your child is confirmed as eligible the school will be informed and free school meal entitlement will be provided for the 2026-2027 academic year
- If your child is confirmed as not eligible and you feel the result is inaccurate, especially if you receive Universal Credit or other benefits, please contact the benefits team at your Local Authority
- If your child is confirmed as not eligible and your circumstances change during the 2026-2027 academic year, please re-check your eligibility.

If you require any support with the process, please contact the school office.

Yours faithfully,

Mr S Henshaw

Deputy Headteacher