



# South Dartmoor Community College

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*Empowering everyone to be the best they can be.*

17 October 2024

Dear Parent / Carer

## **RE: FREE SCHOOL MEALS INFORMATION**

We are writing to inform you about the process for applying for Free School Meals (FSM) for your child. If you are in receipt of certain support payments, you may be entitled to receive free school meals for your child.

### **Free School Meals – Qualifying Benefits**

Parents/Carers in receipt of the following support payments will be entitled to receive free school meals:

- Universal Credit (provided you have an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400, as assessed by earnings from up to three of your most recent assessment periods).
- Income Support (IS).
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA).
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (IRESA).
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit.
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income, as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, that does not exceed £16,190).
- Working Tax Credit run-on (the payment someone receives for a further four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit).
- Children who receive a qualifying benefit in their own right are also allowed to receive free school meals.

### **Please Note: Universal Credit**

From 1 April 2018, all existing free school meals claimants will continue to receive free school meals whilst Universal Credit is rolled out. This will apply even if their earnings rise above the new threshold during that time. In addition, any child gaining eligibility for free school meals after 1 April 2018 will be protected against losing free school meals during the Universal Credit roll-out period. Once Universal Credit is fully rolled out, any existing claimants that no longer meet the eligibility criteria at that point (because they are earning above the threshold or are no longer a recipient of Universal Credit) will continue to receive free school meals until the end of their current phase of education (ie primary or secondary).

The free school meal (FSM) protections policy introduced in 2018 protected those eligible for FSM from becoming ineligible while Universal Credit (UC) was being rolled out. This was originally set to last until March 2022 and was subsequently extended to March 2023. The end date for protections has now been extended further until March 2025. This means that a student who was FSM eligible on 1 April 2018, or who has become eligible under the benefits/low-earnings criteria since then, will continue to receive free meals, even if their household income exceeds the eligibility threshold, up until March 2025 and then until the end of their phase of education.

### **Free School Meals Application Process**

Devon County Council has a new process to apply for Free School Meals. Their new system is very fast and efficient, and Parents/Carers will know the outcome of their application almost immediately.

Cont/d ...

Please use the link to apply for Free School Meals. Parents/Carers will need to create an account first on the new [Citizen Portal \(here\)](#).

Please follow the process below:

1. If your application is successful, then Parents/Carers need to send or email confirmation to Mrs Joanna Wills ([jwills1@southdartmoor.devon.sch.uk](mailto:jwills1@southdartmoor.devon.sch.uk)), making sure to include the FSM Reference Number.
2. They can either send:
  - o A screenshot of the confirmation; or
  - o Scan and email the confirmation to [jwills1@southdartmoor.devon.sch.uk](mailto:jwills1@southdartmoor.devon.sch.uk)
3. As soon as the confirmation is received, the student will be able to receive Free School Meals the next day when the College system updates overnight.
4. The College asks that Parents/Carers make sure their child's Cashless Catering account has enough funds, just in case they would like to have more than the allowance credited to their account each day.

Students in receipt of Free School Meals will be able to collect their meal at lunchtime only.

For further information, please see the Government website [here](#) or call the Devon County Council, Education Helpline on 0345 155 1019.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Kind regards



Mrs J Veal  
Executive Head teacher

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