19 October 2026

Smestow Academy
www.smestowacademy.co.uk

Dear Parent/Carers

As you are aware, from September 2026, there were some changes to the way that **free school meals** funding is being allocated to families. This letter and the attached poster from the local authority, provides further information on the changes and clarifies whether there is anything as parents/carers that you need to inform us of. We would encourage all parents/carers to read the information below if you believe your child may be eligible or is already in receipt of Free School Meals.

If you are currently in receipt of free school meals, you do not need to inform us of this as your details will be checked by the local authority against the new criteria. If you believe you may now be eligible but do not currently receive FSM, please contact us in school via postbox@smestowacademy.co.uk or through your child's House Office.

In September 2026, **two categories of free school meals** were made applicable for secondary school pupils.

Targeted free school meals: these pupils will meet the following criteria and will also be eligible for additional Pupil Premium funding:

- Children and young people in families receiving Universal Credit with annual household income under £7,400 (£616.67/month)
- Families with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) – subject to separate criteria

In school this will mean that as well as the additional breakfast allowance for FSM pupils and their daily allocation at lunchtime, pupils eligible for targeted free school meals will also be able to allocate additional funding to support with specific equipment, trips and visits.

Expanded free school meals: this is a new category from September 2026. Pupils eligible for the new expanded free school meals will meet the following criteria but will not be eligible for additional Pupil Premium funding.

- Children and young people in families receiving Universal Credit
- No limit on annual household income, but the above criteria must be met.

In school, this will mean that pupils will only be able to access their daily allocation at lunchtime.

Further information can be found here: Expanding free school meals: what parents need to know – The Education Hub

We would also like to take this opportunity to share some information from Wolverhampton Council regarding support for families who are currently in receipt of FSM/ Pupil Premium funding via the **Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme** which went live on **Friday 26th June**.

- Parents and carers can make bookings by visiting: **www.yowolves.co.uk**
- Last year, **45,010 HAF sessions and meals** were accessed citywide.

Each daily session provides four or more hours of high-quality activities. For summer 2026, there are **36 providers delivering activities across 44 locations citywide**. With a wide range of activities available, there is something for every child to enjoy.

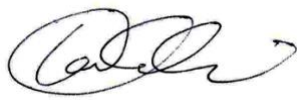
The activities are free to attend for :

- Pupils eligible for benefit-related **Free School Meals**
- Children supported by a **social worker or family worker**
- Children with an **EHCP**

In order to support all families in school we are also collating more detailed information from parents and carers to ensure that all pupils and their families have access to the support in school that they need. As you will be aware we have an excellent pastoral team with a wealth of experience and contacts to support your child. We also have a growing academic intervention team and the information you provide is intended to ensure that we continue to know our pupils and families well. Please take five minutes to complete the form here: Parent/Carer Information Questionnaire - June 2026 – Fill in form

If you have any questions or queries regarding the information in this letter, please contact your child's Head of House by calling the school on 01902 539500 or email via postbox@smestowacademy.co.uk

Yours faithfully



Mr I Chamberlain
Headteacher