Featherby Junior School
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Dear Parents/Guardians

Changes to free school eligibility under Universal Credit
The eligibility criteria for free school meals have been changed. This letter explains the changes and how they might affect you.

What are the new eligibility criteria?
Children are entitled to receive free school meals if they or their parents or guardians receive any of the benefits below.

- Universal Credit, provided they have an annual net earned income not exceeding £7,400 (£616.67 per month)
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guarantee element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit, provided they are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190, as assessed by HMRC
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit

I am currently claiming free school meals – what does this mean for me?
Most people won't be affected by the new criteria. If you're currently claiming free school meals, but don't' meet the new criteria, your child will continue to receive free school meals until the end of the Universal Credit rollout period. This will apply even if your earnings rise above the new threshold or if you stop being entitled to Universal Credit. The rollout period is currently scheduled to end in March 2022.
Once Universal Credit is fully rolled out, your child will keep their free school meal until the end of their current phase of education, i.e. primary or secondary.

I don't currently claim free school meals – what does this mean for me?
If you think you might be eligible for free school meals, please contact Mrs Barraclough in the school office for a confidential chat. Alternatively, log on to the Medway Council website and in the search bar type "free school meals" and you will then be able to input your details and see if you are eligible. If you are eligible, we will be notified. **Please bear in mind, if you are successful in registering for free schools meals, regardless of whether your child actually chooses to have a school meal, the school will receive extra funding – so you will be helping the school with our ever-shrinking school budgets.**

Where can I get more information?
If you need any further information, please speak to a member of school staff or the local authority. You can also visit the free school meal website: https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals

Yours sincerely

Mr D Marsh
Executive Headteacher