

ALDER COPPICE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Achievement through Commitment

Headteacher: Mr P Mandelstam

29 June 2026

Dear Parents,

YEAR 2 TO 3 TRANSITION

I would also like to introduce myself as your child's new Phase Leader next year and look forward to welcoming you to Key Stage 2 and tell you about a few key changes that take place as your child moves into Year 3 and what we call the Lower Key Stage 2 Phase.

Ties

In Year 3, children are required to wear a standard (non-elasticated) House Team tie. In readiness for this, we will be presenting each child (free of charge) with their new tie today, and they will spend some time in class learning and practising how to tie this. Once these are sent home, it would also be useful for you to continue practising during the holiday period so that the children are able to both remove and put back on their own ties in September.

Universal Free School Meals

At the end of Year 2, the Government's Universal Free School Meals programme comes to an end. This means that if your child has a school dinner, you will now be required to pay for any school dinners unless you meet any of the criteria below.

From September 2026, Free School Meals (FSM) in England are being expanded to all children whose households receive Universal Credit, removing the previous income threshold cap.

All parents (even those already receiving benefits) must submit a new application to ensure that their child's entitlement continues.

- **New "Expanded" Category:** If you claim Universal Credit and earn **more** than the previous £7,400 per-year limit, your child will now qualify for free school meals. This covers meals only, excluding additional benefits like uniform vouchers or holiday food programs.
- **"Targeted" Category:** If your household earns **less** than £7,400 per year on Universal Credit (after tax and not including benefits), your child gets free school meals plus extra support like the Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF), Pupil Premium, and school transport.
- **End of Transitional Protections:** Under previous rules, parents who saw their income rise retained their free school meals through transitional protection. These

ALDER COPPICE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Northway ~ Sedgley ~ Dudley ~ West Midlands ~ DY3 3PS

☎: 01384 816610

✉: admin@alder.dudley.sch.uk

Website: www.alder.dudley.sch.uk

automatic protections will end on **September 1, 2026**, meaning households must actively meet the new eligibility criteria to continue receiving meals.

- **Other qualifying benefits are:**

Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

The guarantee part of Pension Credit

Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

Qualifying criteria for families with no recourse to public funds

Even if your child already receives meals (or you transition from previous protections), you are strongly encouraged to submit an application. You can process your claim through the [Dudley Council Free School Meals](https://www.dudley.gov.uk/residents/benefits/free-school-meals/) portal.

<https://www.dudley.gov.uk/residents/benefits/free-school-meals/>

Snacks

Children will no longer have the option to order milk or receive free fruit for breaktimes, as this is only available for Reception and Key Stage 1. As always, we continue to encourage children to bring in a clear, plastic or stainless-steel water bottle which they can refill throughout the day. During breaktimes, children are also welcome to bring in a snack of fresh fruit or vegetables.

If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely

Joanne Randall

Joanne Randall

Assistant Headteacher