



Headteacher's Newsletter – 6th July

Dear Parents/Carers,

It is with great pleasure that I write my first of many Headteacher letters, to you all.

It fills me with real pride to be able to communicate to the parents and carers of our wonderful CoDA students and share my weekly reflections, news and celebrations with you all.

Since becoming the Headteacher of the City of Derby Academy in April, I have had many fantastic opportunities to grow and develop our school. As I have said to the children across the school during assemblies, I want CoDA to be one of the top five schools in the country. I want this for your children and our community. I want you to be as proud as I am of this school and our exceptional young people – they deserve it.

One of my top priorities has been to ensure the school is always, safe, warm, and caring. I am changing certain aspects of the building and site to ensure all the children have safe and welcoming places to be, where they can feel like they all belong. As we always say here, “*We are CoDA!*” (a unique and special place to belong).

You may have seen on our [website](#) that I have introduced The PROUD PARADE. This is a place where I encourage the pupils to bring their proudest work from their lessons, so they can talk me through what they have been doing in lessons. They receive a handshake and SLT postcard, as well as the possibility of a place on the wall.

We have lots to look forward to as we come to the end of term. We have our Sports Day on Friday 10th July, Awards Ceremony on Wednesday 15th July at 5pm, and our Matilda Showcase on Wednesday 22nd July at 6pm. We hold these events as important opportunities to celebrate success and achievements and I really want to encourage you to attend our events, as I would really like to welcome you all in person.

I would like to personally thank you for supporting your child and our school, as they spend their time with us. They are in good hands here at CoDA!

I look forward to meeting you all over the course of the year.

Free School Meals

The Government has announced that the eligibility criteria for Free School Meals will change from September 2026. This letter provides a summary of these changes. For more detailed information, please click the link below to view the Department for Education guidance:

[Department for Education Guidance - Free School Meals](#)



Checking eligibility for Free School Meals benefits both the child and their family, as well as the school. Some families may be entitled to Free School Meals, which could save parents more than £15 per week per child. For a family with two children at school, this could mean savings of over £1,000 per year.

From the start of the 2026 to 2027 academic year, all children from households in receipt of Universal Credit, regardless of household earnings, will be entitled to a free meal. Under these changes, there will be two categories of FSM eligibility:

- **Targeted FSM**
Children from households in receipt of Universal Credit with annual household earnings of **£7,400 or less**, will be eligible for targeted FSM. In addition to receiving free meals, Y7-Y11 pupils eligible for targeted FSM will attract pupil premium funding for their school.
- **Expanded FSM**
Children from households in receipt of Universal Credit, with annual household earnings **exceeding £7,400** will be entitled to expanded FSM (meals only).

At City of Derby Academy, we use an online system that enables you to check your eligibility against the data held by the Department for Education's Eligibility Checking Services (ECS). As student's circumstances may change at any time, once you have entered your details, the system will regularly update, and we will have access to up-to-date information without ever needing to contact you. This includes annual rechecks.

All you are required to do is follow the link below and enter details which include your name, date of birth and National Insurance Number:

www.cloudforedu.org.uk/ofsm/link2ict



If you currently receive FSM, it is important that you recheck your eligibility. If an eligibility check is not completed, or if the check indicates that you are no longer eligible, your FSM entitlement will finish at the end of this term. However, your child will remain part of our Pupil Premium cohort.

Pupil Premium is additional funding allocated to school for children from Reception age to Year 11 who are in care, adopted, have parents in the armed forces or have registered Free School Meals in the last six years (even if this was only for a very short period of time – perhaps when a parent was between jobs). As you can understand, this funding is extremely important and is used to benefit your child in many areas of school life.



If you have any queries regarding the Pupil Premium or the Online Eligibility Checking Service, please email admin@cityofderbyacademy.org.

Kindest regards,

Claire Backhouse

Headteacher