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January 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

**Funding available to support families eligible for Free School Meals**

We are continuing to provide Free School Meal payments direct to families who are entitled to them. A payment of £52.50 per child will be paid direct to parents nominated bank accounts ***by Thursday 21 January***.

This covers the period Monday 11 January to Sunday 31 January. The payment of £52.50 per child, is comprised by three weeks Free School Meals entitlement at £12.50 per week and £5 per week breakfast money.

Eligible families already in receipt of Free School Meals, do not have to apply for this funding. If you have recently applied for income based Free School Meals, please be assured that we are dealing with all applications as quickly as possible and we will contact you direct when your application has been processed.

Families who are on a low income but not currently in receipt of Free School Meals can check entitlement by completing the following online form:  [Check entitlement and apply for Free School Meals](https://aberdeenshirecouncil.formstack.com/forms/free_school_meals_school_clothing_grant_application_form)

The current eligibility criteria is as follows but is included in the entitlement checker mentioned above:  
  
Children are eligible for Free School Meals if their parents (or carers) are in receipt of a qualifying benefit.  
  
The qualifying benefits and allowances are:

* Income Support (IS)
* Income Based Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)
* Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit)
* Any income related element of Employment Support Allowance
* Child Tax Credit (CTC), but not Working Tax Credit (WTC), and have an income of less than £16,105

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* Both Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit with an income of less than £7,330
* Support under Part VI of the [Immigration and Asylum Act 1999](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1999/33/contents)
* Universal Credit with a monthly take home pay of less than £610

If you are aged 16-18 years-old and receive any of the above qualifying benefits in your own right, you can apply for Free School Meals.

For more information please visit: <https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/school-info/assistance/free-school-meals/>

The First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, on Tuesday 19 January gave an update to the Scottish Parliament regarding the possibility of extending school closures among other matters. During this announcement she confirmed schools will remain closed until mid-February at the earliest. We can therefore advise that any further payments of free school meals and the expected date of payment will be made available to you in due course.

Yours sincerely



Anne Marie Davies MacLeod   
Interim Head of Resources and Performance   
Education and Children’s Services