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| Our Ref: AMDMSK | ***Anne Marie Davies Macleod*** |
| Your Ref: | Interim Head of Resources & Performance |
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|  | Education & Children’s Services |
| To: Parents/Carers | Woodhill House |
|  | Westburn Road |
|  | Aberdeen |
|  | AB16 5GB |
|  |  |
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22 February 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

**Funding available to support families eligible for free school meals**

Following the announcement by the First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, on 16 February 2021, we are writing to notify you of arrangements from 22 February 2021:

**Primary 1-3 pupils**

* Any statutory free school meal payments will cease to these year groups and all pupils will receive universal free meals (P1-3) at school.
* A statutory free school meal payment will only be made to those pupils entitled to statutory free school meals if the absence is as a result of non-attendance due to Covid-19 isolation or closure.

**Primary 4-7 pupils**

* If the school returns P1-7 in one class schools, then the free school meals entitlement will be provided within the school in the form of a meal. Pupils in P4-7 year groups who will not be in attendance in school will continue to receive payment for a three week period from 22 February to 14 March 2021. The payment of £52.50 per child, is comprised by 3 weeks free school meals entitlement at £12.50 per week and £5 per week breakfast money.
* There will be provision of meals for children of key workers, these meals will require to be paid for in the normal way.

**Secondary pupils**

* Secondary pupils entitled to statutory free school meals will continue to receive payment for a three-week period from 22 February to 14 March 2021. The payment of £52.50 per pupil, is comprised by 3 weeks free school meals entitlement at £12.50 per week and £5 per week breakfast money.
* There will be provision of meals for any pupils in attendance and these meals will require to be paid for in the normal way.

**Eligibility criteria**

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.

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-2-

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 are 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
* 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/>

Any future arrangements beyond 14 March 2021 in relation to direct payments of free school meals and the £100 Covid Spring Hardship Payment for low-income families will be made available to you in due course.

Yours sincerely



ANNE MARIE DAVIES MACLEOD

Interim Head of Resources & Performance

(Education & Children’s Services)