

Our Ref: AMDM/SK
Your Ref:

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Interim Head of Resources & Performance

1 December 2022

Education & Children's Services
Woodhill House
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To: Parents/Carers

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Dear Parent/Carer

UPDATE ON FREE SCHOOL MEALS AND CHILD BRIDGING PAYMENTS

I am writing to confirm that all pupils currently entitled to statutory free school meals will receive a payment of £25.00 for the period 26 December 2022 to 6 January 2023. This payment is comprised of 2 weeks free school meals at £12.50 per week. Please note – statutory free school meals are awarded to parents/carers based on their income circumstances. The Christmas holiday payment does not apply to children in Primary 1 to 5 who are entitled to universal free school meals, which are not income based.

Eligible families already in receipt of statutory free school meals, do not have to apply for this payment. Payment will be made direct to your nominated bank account by **23 December 2022**.

Scottish Child Bridging Payment – Winter Payment

All pupils currently entitled to statutory free school meals, will also receive a [Scottish Child Bridging Payment](#) of £260.00. Eligible families already in receipt of free school meals do not have to apply for this funding and payment will be made direct to your nominated bank account by **23 December 2022**.

This will be the final Bridging Payment because the Scottish Child Payment is now available for eligible children aged 6 to 15. If you believe you are eligible for the Scottish Child Payment and have not already applied, it is important that you do so now. Delaying your application may mean that you miss out on money that you would otherwise be entitled to.

You can apply for the Scottish Child Payment online at www.mygov.scot/scottish-child-payment or by calling Social Security Scotland on free on 0800 182 2222. If you have already made your application or notified of a change in circumstance if you received the payment for younger children, Social Security Scotland will be in touch shortly in relation to your application.

Pre-school age child in funded early learning and childcare settings

Pre-school age children are not entitled to free school meals and, in accordance with the Scottish Government criteria, are not entitled to the [Scottish Child Bridging Payment](#). This is because the Scottish Child Payment is available. If you have not already done so you can apply for the [Scottish Child Payment on mygov.scot](#).

I have recently applied for Free School Meals, but I've not been notified of the outcome

If you have recently applied for 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](#)

Children are eligible for free school meals if their parents (or carers) are in receipt of a qualifying benefit.

The current 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 £17,005
- Both Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit with an income of less than £7,920
- Support under Part VI of the [Immigration and Asylum Act 1999](#)
- Universal Credit with a monthly net pay from your employer of less than £660 (this is based on your actual net pay, not the figure used by Universal Credit)
(the qualifying benefits and allowances are subject to change)

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/>

Yours faithfully



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