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To: Parents/Carers

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Dear Parents/Carers

### **Updates for families eligible for Free School Meals**

Following recent Scottish Government announcements, please see below the latest arrangements concerning Free School Meals and the Scottish Child Bridging Payments. Some frequently asked questions are answered too.

### **Expansion of Free School Meals to Primary 5 pupils**

With effect from January 2022 universal free school meals will be expanded from Primary 1 to Primary 4 to include pupils in Primary 5.

### **Direct payment of Free School Meals for October 2021 holidays**

All pupils currently entitled to statutory free school meals, will receive a payment of £25.00 for the period 18 October 2021 to 29 October 2021. The payment is comprised by two weeks free school meals at £12.50 per week.

### **Scottish Child Bridging Payment – October 2021**

All pupils currently entitled to statutory free school meals, will receive a [Scottish Child Bridging Payment](#) of £160.00.

### **Do I need to apply for this funding and when will I receive payment?**

Eligible families already in receipt of free school meals, do not have to apply for this funding. Payment will be made direct to your nominated bank account by **15 October 2021**.

### **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 now 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 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](#)

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 £16,105
- Both Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit with an income of less than £7,500
- Support under Part VI of the [Immigration and Asylum Act 1999](#)
- Universal Credit with a monthly take home pay of less than £625  
*(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.

## **Future Payments 2021**

In addition to the October Scottish Children Bridging Payment, the Scottish Government also announced a £160 payment which will be paid to eligible families in December 2021 along with direct payment of free school meals. Further information will be made available later in the year confirming the expected payment date.

## **Future Payments 2022/2023**

Four equal payments of £130 will be made at Easter, Summer, October and Christmas along with direct payment of free school meals. The payments will be made in line with the start of the school holidays. Further information will be provided in advance of the payment dates.

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

Yours sincerely



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