**COVID-19- School Meal Provision and Easter Provision**

**Dear Parent/Carer**

We recently received information from the Government regarding the publicised Free School Meals voucher scheme. We are working closely with the Local Authority to ensure we follow the guidance in terms of School Meal Provision.

**Over the Easter break**

Packed lunches will continue to be available over the Easter holidays for families entitled to **benefits-related Free School Meals**, as well as **all pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2**. If this applies to your family, please drop in and collect a sandwich and grab bag from the main entrance between the times of 12.00-12.30pm daily. The school will **only** receive enough meals for families registered as above. Also please note that whilst the school itself is closed on Good Friday and Easter Monday, lunch bags will still be available however you will need to come through the car park behind school to the kitchen entrance to pick one up.

**Who will be able to receive vouchers after Easter?**

After Easter, vouchers will **ONLY** be available for children whose families are registered as being entitled to benefits-related Free School Meals. These families are in the process of being contacted by school staff. Each child is eligible to receive a voucher to the value of £15 per week, and the voucher can be used in the supermarket of your choice which you will be asked to specify when school staff contact you.

**Who will NOT be able to receive vouchers after Easter?**

If you have a child in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 who usually gets a school meal but you are **not registered for benefits-related Free School Meals** then you will **NOT** receive vouchers. However, in the short term, and as a safety net, we will continue to offer a packed lunch to all pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 which you can collect from the main entrance daily between the times of 12.00-12.30 p.m.

**What can you do if you think you might be eligible but are not yet registered?**

Some parents/carer will already be eligible but won’t have registered as your child was receiving a free lunch anyway. For many others, the current, challenging situation may have changed your financial situation and you may now have become eligible. The eligibility criteria for Free School Meals can be found on the North Tyneside Free School Meal Webpage: <https://my.northtyneside.gov.uk/category/238/free-school-meals> .

Please register to see if you are eligible for Free School Meals. Whilst there may a time lag when a child is being registered, staff in the school office have access to the most up-to-date list of children who are registered for benefits-related Free School Meals and are therefore eligible for the voucher payments.

**How will the voucher scheme work?**

We are beginning the task of registering families on the portal and ordering vouchers. As part of the registration process, we will contact those of you who are eligible and ask for the email address of the primary carer for each child. If you do not have access to email then please contact the school and we will seek to find a way to support you. Vouchers are purchased by each school for those who are registered as eligible using the Government’s online portal. We will communicate directly with those registered about the redemption of vouchers once this is determined.

**When will vouchers start to be sent out?**

Vouchers will only be issued during term time. We are working hard with the aim that the first vouchers will be sent out early in the first week after the Easter holidays (20th April 2020). If there are any delays we will contact those eligible and extend the packed lunch offer for as long as it takes for the voucher scheme to become established. We will continue to update you with further information as and when we receive it. As always, if you have any queries about the School Meal Provision, please get in touch with us.

**I**f you are experiencing significant hardship and you are struggling to manage, please do not suffer in silence. School staff are available on 07426 557703 or 07413041265 and we may be able to offer advice or signpost you to an organisation who can help you. If we do not answer straightaway, please leave a message or send a text and we will get back to you as soon as we can.

Take care and stay safe.

Yours sincerely

David Harrison

Headteacher