

Free School Meals

Information for parents has been published on the Council's website.

From Monday 23 March 2020, it has been agreed that pupils who are eligible for a free school meal when at school will be provided with a direct payment made into the parents' bank accounts to cover the cost of the meals they would be entitled to receive at school. The payment has been agreed at £2.30 per meal (higher rate meal cost in Perth and Kinross Council) and is being paid fortnightly in advance for the period schools are closed.

Money is being paid directly to the parent responsible for the child to enable them to purchase food to feed their child/children while schools are closed as an alternative to receiving a free meal in school.

Direct payments for Free School Meals will be made only to the following:

- All primary and secondary pupils whose parents are in receipt of qualifying benefits providing entitlement to free school meals/school clothing grant;
- Nursery pupils who are Strong Start 2s, Support for Children and Families places and those nursery pupils in 1140 pilot nurseries in schools whose parents are in receipt of a qualifying benefit for free school meals/clothing grant; and
- P1-P3 pupils whose parents contact the Council to request a direct payment to support feeding their children while they cannot access their free school meals.

Parents in the first category have been paid automatically as the Council holds their details from their Free School Meals and Clothing Grant applications.

As P1-P3 free school meals is a universal provision and not dependent on qualifying benefits or an application, P1-P3 parents are not being asked to complete a Free School Meals application form in order to receive a direct payment as the majority are not on benefits. For those P1-P3 parents who have contacted the Council requesting a direct payment, a kwiksurvey has been developed to allow us to gather the correct information from these parents to allow us to make a direct payment to them. P1-P3 parents who have contacted us are sent the survey to complete, the returned information is validated by ECS and then processed for payment.

Any parent seeking assistance with Free School Meals who meets the criteria above and is not already receiving a direct payment, should email ECSSchools@pkc.gov.uk

We are now making direct payments for free school meals to over 2700 pupils. Any parent in P1-P3 who has not claimed this as yet and is requiring this support, will be paid from 23 March 2020. Any families who, as the result of unemployment during this period either now or throughout this period, will be required to claim qualifying benefits, will become eligible for free school meals and can be added to the direct payments if required. New direct payment requests will be added to the next fortnightly payment run.

I trust this information is helpful and should you require any further information please contact ECSSchools@pkc.gov.uk in the first instance.