

Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

I hope that you and your family are adjusting to what has become the new normal in these unprecedented times. Following the Government announcement that we face at least a further three weeks of lockdown, I feel it is useful to clarify a few points regarding school meals.

### **My KS1 child had free school meals are we still entitled to them?**

Only those parents who are entitled to income related FSM are eligible at this current time. This means that if your child receives Universal Free School Meals as a result of being in EYFS or KS1 then you are not eligible.

### **My child didn't have free school meals but we need them now, what can we do?**

Your child may be eligible for free school meals if you are receiving any of the following:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Child Tax Credit (not Working Tax Credit), with an annual income below £16,190
- Pension Guarantee Credit
- Employment and Support Allowance, income related
- Support under part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act, 1999
- Working Tax Credit run-on, paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit, with a household income of £7,400 or less (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

Please register at [Hertfordshire Free School Meals](#). If you need support, please email the school and they will advise you what to do next.

### **My family doesn't fall into the income bracket but we still need help with free school meals.**

The Government has introduced temporary measures of support by extending FSM eligibility to include some children of groups who have no recourse to public funds.

These groups are:

- children of Zambrano carers
- children of families with no recourse to public funds with a right to remain in the UK on grounds of private and family life under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights
- children of families receiving support under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 who are also subject to a no recourse to public funds restriction

These groups are also subject to a maximum household earnings threshold of £7,400 per annum.

### **Can we just have the £15 vouchers?**

Whilst we appreciate that some parents may have a preference for vouchers, this option is **not** something that we are offering. Our caterers, Chartwells, have worked tirelessly to support our children, parents and staff and we are pleased that they continue to do so.

The Government guidance is very clear – *'If your school catering service cannot provide meals or food parcels, you should offer families of pupils eligible for benefits-related free school meals an alternative..... Where able, schools should provide eligible pupils not attending school, with meals or food parcels through their current food provider. Where this is not possible, the Department for Education has developed a centrally-funded national voucher scheme to support schools with this process.'*

## Healthy Food Ideas

The Chartwells team of Nutritionists and Chefs have been working with CBBC celebrity Chef and Leon co-founder Allegra McEvedy MBE to create resources to support home schooling whilst enjoying healthy snacks. You can visit Chartwell's [Love School Meals website](#) to download home-schooling activities, or visit Chartwell's [YouTube page](#) to watch some interactive cook-along demonstration videos to keep your children entertained whilst learning new cooking skills.

## Salvation Army

The pastoral teams across Beechfield, Cherry Tree and Laurance Haines schools have been working with the Salvation Army and the Mayor to provide food for families that find themselves in increasingly difficult circumstances. Support packages contain essentials and a few luxury items such as biscuits and coffee and costs £25 to put together. This cost has been covered by the Salvation Army so far. Unfortunately like a lot of charities, they have seen a huge reduction in revenue streams as their shops and clothes banks have closed and yet there is an increasing demand nationwide for their services.

We appreciate that this is a very challenging time for everyone but if you are in a position to support then please visit <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/watford-salvation-army>. You can also support by sharing the link as widely as you can on social media. Over 70 families in our trust and many more families across Watford have benefited from this work, so it would be great if we could keep it going. A huge thank you to the Salvation Army and all of the staff and parent volunteers who have donated, sourced, packed and delivered food parcels over the last month.

## Support Line

If you are struggling in these difficult times, your financial circumstances have changed or you are unsure how you can feed your family, please remember that you can call our pastoral lines. We have provided a dedicated phone number for each school which will be operating Monday to Friday from 9.00am until 5.00pm. Please send a text with your name and the name of your child/children. Staff will respond to the text by calling you back within 24 hours. Where a text is received on a Friday, expect to be called the following Monday. If it is urgent and you need a quicker response, please type URGENT at the beginning of the text. Thank you to our amazing Pastoral Leads who have set this great service up.

Beechfield - 07535 177903

Cherry Tree – 07535 177 881

Laurance Haines – 07960 014104

Please keep tweeting and sharing the fantastic work your children are doing, it is very much appreciated by all of the staff across the Inclusive Multi Academy Trust.

Yours sincerely,



James Roach

Chief Executive Officer

Inclusive Multi Academy Trust