



Spalding Parish Church of England Day School

6th April 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

COVID 19 – Free School Meals

During the last couple of weeks, as a school, we have continued to support our families through this difficult time. Our staff have continued to offer the best provision and support they can and they continue to do so – I would like to say a huge thank you to all of them for their support during this challenging period. I would also like to say thank you to all of you for your ongoing support. Please remember if you do have any questions or queries please contact the school via the school office office@spaldingparish.lincs.sch.uk. Emails are monitored at least daily and this will continue even during the Easter break.

As you may be aware we have continued to provide weekly food parcels for families in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM) during this time given the importance of healthy food and the obvious health benefits, helping pupils establish healthy habits for life. We have received a very small number of queries with regards to this provision following the recent announcement by the DfE with regards to the voucher scheme so wanted to clarify our position as a school, a position that is fully supported by both the Lincoln Anglican Academies Trust (LAAT) and the Local Authority.

As a school we will be continuing to provide the weekly food packs to support our families in ensuring they have access to basic supplies where provisions may be short or difficult to access. I know I myself have had some difficulty over recent weeks with purchasing certain supplies including bread and tinned products. We have also made this decision to support our local community, particularly local businesses and local employment. Should we not continue to support our local food supplier, they could fold which in turn would result in the loss of local jobs. Given the fact that the Free School Meal voucher scheme is an alternative available to schools only if current food suppliers are no longer able to support with this, we are following the recommended DfE guidance – see below for direct extract from the guidance.

In the first instance, we are encouraging schools to provide meals or food parcels through their current food provider. If this is not possible, schools can provide supermarket or shop vouchers to eligible families.

[Full guidance is available here](#)

We will however be continuing to provide weekly food parcels during the Easter break despite the Government saying this is not essential. Parcels will be able to be collected at the beginning of the week with parents contacted via Wisepay to confirm arrangements and timings.



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We have also received a number of queries from parents with regards to eligibility for Free School Meals and whether they should be receiving a food parcel for their child. It would appear there is some confusion between Free School Meals (FSM) and Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM). Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) are currently provided, through Government funding, for FS2, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils whereas Free School Meals are provided, on receipt of an application, to low income families. Currently it is only FSM children, and not UIFSM children, that are eligible for the weekly food parcel provision.

Having said that, as a school, we already know that there are families in school who are potentially eligible for FSM but have not yet applied, either because their child already receives UIFSM, you are unsure how to apply or you may previously have applied for a sibling and assumed this then means all children in the family are eligible. We are also fully aware that, given the current circumstances families' personal circumstances may have changed or may change over the coming weeks and months. If you do think you are eligible, we would strongly recommend you make an application, particularly given the fact there is no confirmation of how long UIFSM will be available for. If your application is successful, you would be eligible to receive the weekly food parcels currently however schools do also receive additional funding for FSM pupils that is intended to be spent on supporting their education during their time in school.

Your child (ren) may be eligible to receive FSM's if they are in full-time education and your household is in receipt of any of the benefits shown below:

- 🏠 Universal Credit - your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get).
- 🏠 Income Support.
- 🏠 Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance.
- 🏠 Income-related Employment and Support Allowance.
- 🏠 Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
- 🏠 The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit.
- 🏠 Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more £16,190).
- 🏠 Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit.

How to apply

Parents and guardians can apply for FSM online via the link below and I have enclosed an online guide within this letter too. You should be notified by LCC as to whether your application is successful.

<https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/schools-and-education/free-school-meals>

If you require further advice, please email the school office using office@spaldingparish.lincs.sch.uk.

Kind Regards,



Diane Mulley
Head Teacher



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