



St Alban's CE Primary School

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National Support School
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Teaching & Leadership

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Dear Parents and Carers,

Free School Meals

Within school, there are two groups of pupils who ordinarily qualify for Free School Meals: those who qualify due to the benefits they claim and who have applied for Free School Meals through the correct route (more details about this below) **and** those who are in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 (this is called Universal Free School Meals).

During our current school closure due to the Coronavirus epidemic, the government guidance is that those children who are eligible for Free School Meals (not Universal Free School Meals) would still continue to have access to this provision. In our school, we have been offering this as a 'pack out' to date, which has been collected by the families of those eligible for Free School Meals who would like this.

From after Easter, we will be managing this differently, and, rather than offering a 'pack out', we will offer instead government vouchers to all the pupils who are on our Free School Meal register (not Universal Free School Meals). Currently, we receive £2.30 a day for pupils in receipt of Free School Meals, **but the government is lifting this to £3 a day per child**. We will be in touch with you personally by email or phone to let you know how you can collect these from us if you are on our Free School Meal register. The vouchers can be redeemed at most major supermarkets.

Some of you may have not registered for Free School Meals even though you are eligible. This may be because your child is in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2 and you haven't felt the need to do this yet as you access Universal Free School Meals, or it could be because your child usually prefers their own packed lunch, or possibly because you didn't qualify before but your circumstances have changed and you do now. If this is the case and you believe you qualify, I cannot encourage you enough to apply for this benefit. Once we have been notified by the local authority that you qualify, we can get the vouchers to you as well. These are difficult times for everyone, and we all need all the help we can get!

The government has been very clear in stating that:

"What about infants that receive a free meal under universal infant free school meals?"

It is right that schools concentrate their effort and resources on those who are eligible for **benefits-related free school meals** at this time. There is no requirement to continue to provide universal infant free school meals to pupils in reception, year 1, or year 2 who are unable to attend school. Children in those year groups who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals will be supported.

[How do I apply for Free School Meals?](#)

1. First, check if you qualify – it is not just if you are unemployed, so please do look at the list below for other eligibility criteria.
2. Registering is really quick and easy – if you think you qualify, go onto the RMBC website (www.rotherham.gov.uk) and search 'free school meals'. Applications can be completed

online or forms can be downloaded from the website. Alternatively, you can collect an application form from the school office.

3. Your claim will be automatically processed if you receive Housing Benefit or Council Tax Support and get any of the qualifying benefits.

Your child is eligible for Free School Meals if you get one or more of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit (provided you have an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400, as assessed by earnings from up to three of your most recent assessment periods)
- Income Support
- Income based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income related Employment Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit as long as you have a yearly household income of less than £16,190 (as assessed by HM Revenue and Customs) and do not get Working Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit run- on (paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)

We are here to help you all in these challenging times, so please email us at the school if you have any questions and we will get back to you. We will be contacting the parents/carers of our children who receive Free School Meals very soon to let them know how to redeem their vouchers.

Take care everyone,

Alison Adair
Executive Headteacher