



**St Joseph's R.C. Primary School**  
Coast Road, Blackhall, Hartlepool, TS27 4HE  
Tel/Fax: 0191 586 4308  
Head Teacher: Mrs L Ashton  
Chair of Governors: Mr P Francis



8<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

### **Free School Meal Voucher Scheme**

Following the release of further government guidance regarding the COVID19 provision for Free School Meals whilst school closures are in place, I wanted to write to you all to outline the arrangements at St Joseph's Primary School moving forward.

The government have outlined their plans for a free school meal voucher scheme. For those families that are eligible for a benefits-related free school meal, they will all receive an evoucher of £15 per eligible child, per week. This will start at St Joseph's following the Easter break, on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April. Parents will receive an email which contains a 16-digit eCode and a link to the redemption website: [www.freeshoolmeals.co.uk](http://www.freeshoolmeals.co.uk). **Please note the eCode will expire after one month.** Once the eCode is redeemed you will receive your eGift card (voucher). The voucher lasts for at least 12 months depending on which supermarket you choose when ordering your eGift card. Any children of critical workers, that are eligible for free school meals (benefits related), will also receive a voucher.

We are busy contacting all of those that we do currently have listed as eligible for a free school meal (benefits-related) to ensure we have the most up to date email address to be able to send the voucher via this method.

The vouchers can currently be redeemed at:

- Morrisons
- Tesco
- Sainsbury's
- Asda
- Waitrose
- M&S

You can redeem the voucher by either printing it off and handing it in at the supermarket or by displaying it via an electronic device such as a smart phone or tablet to the cashier. The government are working to see if they can add other supermarkets to the list for the convenience of everyone and we will keep you updated regarding any changes around this.

### **Eligibility**

We are also sadly aware that in this current crisis, there may now be more families that are eligible for free school meals than previously, due to changes in circumstances. If you're

**Respect, friendship, excellence, care**

unsure whether your child would qualify, please use the below guidance, and get in touch with us if you think your child might be eligible.

Your child may be able to get free school meals if you get any of the following:

- 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 Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - **paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit**
- Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

If your child is eligible for free school meals, they'll remain eligible until they finish the phase.

### **Universal Infant Free School Meals for children in Key Stage One**

The government have outlined that schools should concentrate their effort and resources on those who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals at this time. Unfortunately, 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 of course be supported and receive an e-voucher too.

### **Current Provision**

The current provision of packed lunches for those who are eligible for benefits related free school meals (including those of critical workers) that have requested a lunch, will remain in place until Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April, following the Easter break. Please note if your child is eligible to receive a voucher and is in school receiving a meal as part of or vulnerable/critical worker childcare provision, you will not receive a voucher in addition to this.

We understand this is very worrying time for everyone, but by using this voucher scheme we do hope that all the families in need will be able to utilise this provision to assist their families at this time. **Please let us know if you have any difficulty with this scheme - contact us and we will do our best to help you.**

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Ashton  
Headteacher