

Dear Parent/Carer

Free School Meals and Additional Payments

Over the past year, many households have faced challenging times. The impact of the Covid pandemic has increased pressure on household budgets and, whilst restrictions are being eased, many households will continue to face challenges over the coming months. It is important for children to have a healthy, nutritious lunch each day and I am writing to encourage every parent/guardian to consider whether they may qualify for free school meals.

You may qualify for free school meals if your household is on a low income and in receipt of:

- Income Support/Pension Credit
- Income based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Any Income Related element of Employment and Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit (but not Working Tax Credit) with an annual income of £16,105 or less
- Both Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit with an annual income of £7,330 or less
- Universal Credit where your 'monthly earned income' is not more than £610

You will find more information and the application form on the Council's website at: <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/43282/School-Clothing-Grant-Free-School-Meals-and-Milk-Application-Form>

Free School Meal Holiday Payments

All children in receipt of free school meals on the basis of low-income eligibility(P1-S6) as of 25 June 2021 will receive a payment amounting to £15 over each week of the school holidays. The next payments will be made over the summer holidays. Parents will not have to apply for this payment as it will be paid directly into your bank account.

Summer and Winter Family Pandemic Payment

Two £100 Family Pandemic Payments (FPP), paid for each child of school age(P1-S6) in receipt of free school meals on the basis of low-income eligibility criteria, will be made in summer and winter respectively. The first £100 will be made prior to summer school holidays and will be paid to each child in receipt of free school meals on the basis of low-income eligibility as of 25 June 2021. The winter payment will be paid prior to the Christmas school holidays and will be paid for each child in receipt of free school meals on the basis of low-income eligibility as of 22 December 2021. Again, parents will not have to apply for this payment as it will be paid directly into your bank account.

Please take the time to find out whether you are eligible as it can provide additional financial support to you and your family.

If you need help or wish to know if you might qualify for any benefit entitlements then please contact the Advice Shop on 01506 283000 or email advice.shop@westlothian.gov.uk