

27 May 2021

To: All Principals

Free School Meals/School Uniform/Physical Education Clothing Allowance 2021-22

I would like to provide you with an update on the 2021/22 application process for Free School Meals and School Uniform/ Physical Education Clothing Allowances.

The Education Authority (EA) will be issuing communications on the EA website and social media channels to inform parents/ guardians and **continues to seek your support to promote awareness of Free School Meals and Clothing Allowances, and to encourage all potential applicants to apply for the support available.**

Current Eligible Families and New Applicants

Parents/guardians who are currently in receipt of support for the 2020/21 school year will not be sent a pre-populated form for the 2021/22 school year. All parents/ guardians (including new applicants) **are required to apply on-line from Monday, 7 June 2021 via the EA website <https://www.eani.org.uk/financial-help/free-school-meals>.**

It is recommended that parents/ guardians apply during the month of June, or as early as possible, to enable applications to be processed for support to be in place for their children for the new school year. Parents/ guardians are being advised of the importance of providing valid Bank or Building Society account details in the claimant's own name. Payments cannot be made into Post Office accounts.

Paper application forms

If you have retained any paper application forms from the 2020/21 year, please discard these and do not give them out to parents/guardians.

Special Diet

Parents/Guardians whose child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs (Stage 5) and requires a special diet should contact the Meals and Uniform Section for a paper application form if they wish to apply under the special diet criteria.

Pupils Eligible for Free School Meals

The first full list of pupils eligible for free school meals will be sent to you at the end of August 2021 via AnyComms, with weekly updates sent each Friday and further full lists sent on the following Monday. **Can you please check the lists and inform the EA Meals and Uniform Section immediately if a pupil/student has not enrolled for the 2021/22 school year or is no longer in attendance during the year.**

“To inspire, support and challenge all our Children and Young People to be the best that they can be.”

Education Authority, Meals and Uniform Section

3 Charlemont Place, The Mall, Armagh, BT61 9AX **T:** +44 (0)28 3751 2523 **W:** www.eani.org.uk

Free School Meals / Uniform Grants Helpdesk

The Free Schools Meals and Uniform Grants Helpdesk is operated by staff across the EA Free School Meals/ Uniform Grants service.

It is available to assist parents/guardians and schools who may have any queries. The Helpdesk operates Monday – Friday from 9.00am to 4.30pm and can be contacted via email: mealsanduniform@eani.org.uk. The telephone number which should be used for all enquiries is: (028) 9041 8044.

E-mails and telephone calls should no longer be made directly to individual Free School Meals/ Uniform staff as they will be diverted to the Helpdesk for response.

Further information including eligibility criteria for the 2021-22 school year and a list of Frequently Asked Questions to assist with any parental queries can be accessed by logging onto www.eani.org.uk/financial-help/free-school-meals.

Thank you for your continued assistance in relation to the provision of free school meals to eligible children.

Yours sincerely



Colleen Harkin
Head of Pupil Admissions & Financial Support Services

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