**Questions and Answers – Free School Meals**

In the light of the current situation with the Covid-19 virus, the following questions and answers have been devised to assist parents/guardians and schools with concerns regarding free school meals.

**Will I receive help with free school meals now that my children are not able to attend school?**

The Education Authority has been working with the Department of Education to explore options for making payment to families who are entitled to free school meals. If your child/children currently receive(s) free school meals you will receive financial assistance for each entitled child.

**How will this help be provided?**

Payments will be made directly into your last known bank account.  If you do not have a bank account in your own name, you will be paid by cheque.  Vouchers will not be issued.

**IMPORTANT: If your bank account details have changed in the last 12 months, please see below for details of how to update this.**

Parents can now update their bank details on the EA Website.

Please find link:

<https://www.eani.org.uk/getfsm>

**When will I receive my first payment?**

The date that first payment is made has not yet been confirmed.  The Education Authority is prioritising to ensure payments commence as soon as possible (we will update the FAQs when we have further information).  **Please note incorrect bank or building society sort code or account number details may prevent payment.**

**How much will I receive and how often?**

Parents/guardians will receive £2.70 per day, payments will be made every two weeks.  For each child you will receive a fortnightly payment of £27.00 until 30th June or until your child’s/children’s school reopen whichever is soonest.

**My home address and/or bank details has changed in the last year.  How can I update these details?**

In the next few days you will be able to complete the secure form that will be available on the Education Authority’s website at [www.eani.org.uk](http://www.eani.org.uk/) .  If you are updating bank details please ensure that you provide the National Insurance number and bank details of the parent/guardian who last applied to free school meals and uniform grants.  Please note that the bank account must be in the same name of the parent/guardian who previously applied for assistance.

**I have recently lost my job or my circumstances have changed.  Can I receive help with free school meals?**

Yes, you need to immediately inform HMRC / Universal Credit / the Social Security Agency and inform them of the change in your circumstances.  When you begin to receive a qualifying benefit, you can then submit a free school meals application form with the relevant proof of benefit (see details on the application form).  Application forms are available from the Education Authority’s website [**https://www.eani.org.uk/node/1075**](https://www.eani.org.uk/node/1075).

**How will I be informed about payments and will the schools be kept up to date with children’s’ entitlements?**

If you have provided valid bank details to us, you should check your account for payments.  If you have given us your email address, a payment remittance will be sent to you by email.  If we do not have valid bank details, you will be paid by a crossed cheque and a remittance will be included with the cheque.