

Extension of Free School Meals for P1 to P3 – Q &A

You may be aware that from January 2015, children in primary 1 to 3 across Scotland will have the option of taking a free school meal every day. We have put together this question and answer sheet to answer some of the questions you may have.

What and When

Who is entitled?

- All pupils in primary 1 to primary 3 are entitled to a free school meal

When does this start?

- Tuesday 6th of January 2015

I know some pupils are entitled to free milk in school; does this apply to all P1 to P3 pupils from January?

- No, only those currently entitled to Free School Milk will continue to receive milk

Will there be hot meals on a Friday?

- No, we will continue to provide a packed lunch option on a Friday only. This has been checked with Scottish Government and they are happy with this provision. In schools where a hot meal is currently served on a Friday this will continue.

How

Do I need to sign my child up for school meals?

- No, all pupils in P1 to P3 are automatically entitled

Does my child need to take a meal every day to qualify for free school meals or can I choose which days they go?

- You can choose to go every day or just a few days each week, whatever suits your child, as long as you inform the school

I know the school dining room is already busy, how will you manage to feed more children?

- We have carried out surveys with all schools to assess their capacity. Many schools do not need to make any changes, however where required, we are putting arrangements in place to accommodate the increase in numbers. These include changes to serving counters to increase speed of service, additional seating and increasing the number of sittings.
- If there are changes these will be communicated on a school by school basis.

Pre-Ordering Lunch

Some schools already pre-order their choices for lunch in advance and we are hoping to implement this in all our schools prior to January 2015.

Why do I have to order in advance?

- We are implementing a pre-order system for school lunches in all our schools to help us manage the process and ensure that all pupils receive their first choice of main meal when they come for lunch.

My child won't remember what they ordered, how is this managed?

- Schools have a note of each child's choice and issue coloured bands or tokens to identify what choice each pupil has made. This means that pupils don't have to remember what they have chosen and also speeds up the service.
- For example; red token for the hot meat choice, green for the hot vegetarian choice and blue for the baked potato choice.
- Each school manages this slightly differently and details are available from your child's school.

What if I forget to order, will my child still get a meal?

- On these odd occasions we will still be able to provide a meal however, we encourage everyone to ensure they have ordered their meal in advance.
- In some instances it is the schools policy to only provide the baked potato for those who have not pre-ordered. Those who have pre-ordered will have first choice.

My school doesn't pre-order just now, how will this work?

- Details of pre-order systems, how to order and when to return your order will be provided from your child's school.

Special Diets

We have a special diet policy in place and if your child requires a special diet or has any allergies then you should complete and return a special diet request form from the school office.

Do you cater for special diets?

- Where possible we can provide information on our meals to allow pupils to take school meals. For example: Carbohydrate information for diabetic pupils
- Some adaptations can be made to some dishes to ensure they are suitable for pupils with special diets. For example: coeliac

My child has allergies – will they be able to take school meals?

- From December 2015 we will be providing information on each of our menu choices to indicate where the 14 identifiable allergens are present.
- This information will be available on the council website and also in the school kitchen.