



23rd March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

We are committed to ensuring that pupils who are entitled to benefits-related free school meals continue to receive this support, even if they are no longer attending school due to the coronavirus outbreak. Following the recent letter from Star Academies, I am writing to provide details of the arrangements we have put in place for pupils of our school.

The Government is currently developing a national scheme to provide supermarket vouchers in place of free school meals until schools reopen. Once the Government scheme is running, it is likely that we will join the scheme. In the meantime, Star Academies is introducing a voucher system with Tesco to ensure that your child continues to receive a free meal each school day.

How the voucher system works

Through our scheme, we will provide a Tesco voucher to the parent or adult with caring responsibility for all children who are currently eligible for free school meals. The vouchers can be only be used to purchase food and will be issued every two weeks during term time, whilst schools remain closed. Vouchers will not be issued to cover the previously published school holiday periods, such as the Easter holiday. Each fortnightly voucher will have a value of £25 per eligible child (£2.50 per day).

The vouchers will be emailed directly by Tesco to the email address of the parent or adult with caring responsibility for the eligible child. It is therefore important that we have your correct email address. If your email address has recently changed or you are unsure if the school has your correct email address, please contact the school urgently by emailing FSM@thevalley.staracademies.org. Please include your name and the name(s) of your child(ren).

If you do not have an email address, you will be able to collect the vouchers from the school office. Please notify the school office urgently if you would like to collect the vouchers in person. We will then notify you each time a voucher is ready for collection.

If you do not wish to receive a Tesco voucher in place of your child's free school meals, then please notify us urgently either by phoning the school office or emailing FSM@thevalley.staracademies.org. In these circumstances, we will consider alternative arrangements for your child.

Entitlement

Please note that the arrangements outlined in this letter are only available to pupils who currently receive benefits-related free school meals.

Whilst the arrangements outlined above will only be in place for pupils eligible for benefits-related free school meals, we recognise that some of our families may struggle to afford everyday essentials over the coming weeks, particularly those who are self-isolating. If you require support with the cost of food and other essential items for your family during this difficult time, please email info@staracademies.org and include your child's name and school. We are here to support the Star family through this difficult time and will try to support you as best we can.



I have included some further information about the voucher scheme below.

I am very grateful to you for continuing to work in partnership with your child's school, particularly during these very challenging times. I hope that you and your family stay safe and well.

Yours sincerely,



Mr Kieran Larkin

Executive Principal

FAQs - Free School Meals

What is the value of each voucher?

Each voucher will be worth £25. The vouchers will be issued every two weeks, so this equates to £2.50 a day for 10 days. This is slightly more than the current free school meal provision of £2.40 a day.

Will vouchers be issued in advance or arrears?

The vouchers will be issued in advance at the beginning of each two-week period.

Will the vouchers cover school holidays?

No. The vouchers will only cover days when pupils would have been in school.

What exactly will I receive?

If you sign up to the email scheme, you will receive an email from Tesco which will include an E Voucher.

Can I use the voucher to buy anything?

No. The voucher can only be used to purchase food.

Where can the voucher be spent?

You can use the voucher to buy food in any Tesco store in the United Kingdom. The vouchers cannot be used for online purchases or at Tesco petrol stations.

Will I be able to use the voucher online?

No. The voucher cannot be used for purchases on the Tesco website.

My child isn't eligible for Free School Meals, but I'm struggling to afford everyday essentials. What should I do?

We recognise that some of our families may struggle to afford everyday essentials over the coming weeks, particularly those who are self-isolating. If you require support with the cost of food and other essential items for your family during this difficult time, please email info@staracademies.org and include your child's name and school. We are here to support the Star family through this difficult time and will try to support you as best we can.