

Free school meals to continue until Easter – how to check if you qualify

Families who may be struggling to provide food for their children can check online to see if they are entitled to receive free school meal payments, if they do not already receive them.

Funding from The City of Edinburgh Council and The Scottish Government means that free school meal payments for thousands of eligible families will continue over the Christmas holidays and both the February and Easter breaks next year.

Backdated payments were made yesterday, Monday 26 October 2020, to support those families who are eligible for the October break period, where the council already holds their payment details.

The Council is also issuing letters to parents/carers who have been identified as being entitled to free school meals but where they do not have payment details for them – so these families do not need to contact the Council.

The payments are paid to P1 to S6 children who receive a School Clothing Grant.

The Council is now urging families who may be missing out on the vital payments to [check online](#) to see if they are eligible. Those who already receive free school meals do not need to contact the Council.

The funding announcement comes after the Edinburgh Poverty Commission published their [final report](#) last month which highlighted that almost 15% of Edinburgh's population lives in poverty, including one in five children.

The payment for free school meals reinforces the council's commitment to providing much needed support to families through such projects as the Discover! programme which aims to reduce food and financial insecurity during the school holidays and supported over 200 families last week. Families took part in a number of online cooking, music and art sessions in addition to receiving a Discover! box containing fresh foods, art supplies, active schools kits and information on advice services as well as support with devices at home if they had no digital access.

Council Leader Adam McVey said:"This provides important support for families across the city and almost 6,500 young people have already benefited from free school meal payments covering the October break.

"This council and Scottish Government funding means that we're helping families most in need over the winter months. These are extremely challenging times for everyone but no family should have to worry about how they're going to put food on plates during the holidays or at any other time."

Depute leader Cammy Day said:"As the city's Poverty Champion

I'm fully aware of the enormous struggles many people are experiencing so this vital funding means no families need to go hungry in Scotland's capital over the winter months.

"The Edinburgh Poverty Commission report highlighted that one in five children are living in poverty so we want to make sure that everyone who's entitled to receive this financial lifeline can do so. This is especially important as many families' circumstances may have changed over the recent months with furlough and redundancies. Please check our online application form which outlines who is eligible for funding and apply before the end of November so we can process the payments as swiftly as possible."

Look at this [application form](#) for families eligible for free school meal payments to find out if you qualify.