

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

COVID19 – FREE SCHOOL MEAL PROVISION CONTINGENCY ARRANGEMENTS

REPORT BY DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek Council Executive approval to amend the free school meal provision contingency arrangements to reflect the changes to universal free school meal provision to P4 and P5 pupils during the 2021/22 school year and to extend the provisions to eligible children impacted by circumstances of individual self-isolation as a consequence of a positive COVID19 test result.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Council Executive is asked to approve:

1. From 17 August 2021 a payment of £3 per pupil per school day to the families of P5-S6 children and young people eligible for free school meals; and P1-P4 pupils in receipt of school clothing grant impacted as a consequence of national COVID19 restrictions on the opening of schools, or an individual requirement to self-isolate due to a positive COVID19 test result; and
2. From 6 January 2022 a payment of £3 per pupil per school day to the families of P6-S6 children and young people eligible for free school meals; and P1-P5 pupils in receipt of school clothing grant impacted as a consequence of national COVID19 restrictions on the opening of schools, or an individual requirement to self-isolate due to a positive COVID19 test result.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I	Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; providing equality of opportunities; developing employees; making best use of our resources; working in partnership
II	Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	Continued provision for children entitled to free school meals. Educational Continuity Directions and related statutory guidance; non-statutory Scottish Government guidance.
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None

IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed.
VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	The cost of this contingency arrangement would be funded from council resources.
VII	Consideration at PDSP	None
VIII	Other consultations	Head of Finance and Property Services, Financial Management Unit, Education Services; Operational Services, Anti-Poverty Service

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Background

The provision of free school meals to all eligible children and young people has been a key policy objective of the council during the period of school closures. This support has been continued during subsequent school holiday periods, in recognition of the ongoing detriment to low income families caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

D.2 Council Executive Approvals

A decision was made through Standing Order 31 on 10 September 2020, reported to Council Executive on 6 October 2020, to provide all children entitled to free school meals with a take away packed lunch or hot meal and a take away breakfast cereal bar/cereal during the remaining school holidays (excluding public holidays) within the current financial year 2020/21.

In response to the changing circumstances that have evolved since that date, a number of subsequent approvals have enabled direct payments to families of P4-S6 children and young people eligible for free school meals; and P1-P3 pupils in receipt of school clothing grant during periods of home learning as a consequence of national COVID19 restrictions on school openings.

Most recently on 23 March 2021, Council Executive approved contingency arrangements for whole school closures or class groups undertaking home learning as a consequence of COVID19 whereby a payment of £3 per pupil per school day is made to the families of P4-S6 children and young people eligible for free school meals; and P1-P3 pupils in receipt of school clothing grant.

D.3 Free School Meal Expansion

From August 2021 the universal free meal provision has been extended to include all P4 pupils, and will be extended further at all P5 pupils in January 2022.

In order to ensure that there is consistency with the expansion of free meal provision the contingency arrangements will require to be amended to ensure that from 17 August 2021 families of P5-S6 children and young people for free school meals; and P1-P4 pupils in receipt of school clothing grant receive a payment of £3 per child for each day that their child has been unable to attend school as a consequence of national COVID19 restrictions on the opening of schools, or an individual requirement to self-isolate due to a positive COVID19 test result.

There will be a further requirement to amend the provisions from 6 January 2022 to reflect the expansion of universal free meal provision to all P5 pupils.

E. CONCLUSION

The provision of free school meals to all eligible children and young people has been a key policy objective of the council during the period of school closures, and subsequent holiday periods. The proposed amendments to the contingency arrangements will further extend the support offered to children and young people in low income families, and avoid problems of access for children and young people.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

- Council Executive – Free School Meals Holiday Provision - 6 October 2020.
- Council Executive – Free School Meal Provision – School Holidays (2020/21 Academic Year) – 17 November 2020
- Guidance: school re-opening arrangements for January 2021 - <https://www.gov.scot/publication/ool-re-opening-arrangements-for-january-2021/>
- Council Executive - Free School Meal Provision – 5 to 15 January 2021 (by SO31 on 23 December 2020)
- Council Executive - Free School Meal Provision – 18 to 29 January 2021 (by SO31 on 8 January 2021)
- Council Executive - Free School Meal Provision – 1 to 12 February 2021 (by SO31 on 29 January 2021)
- Council Executive - Free School Meal Provision – 22 to 26 February 2021 (by SO31 on 17 February 2021)
- Council Executive - Free School Meal Provision – 1 to 12 March February 2021 (by SO31 on 26 February 2021)
- Council Executive - Free School Meal Provision – 15 March to 1 April 2021 (by SO31 on 5 March 2021)
- Council Executive – Free School Meal Provision Contingency Measures

Appendices – None

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