



South Avenue Primary School

South Avenue, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 4SU

Telephone: 01795 477750

Email: headteacher@southavenue.kent.sch.uk

Headteacher: Miss Samantha Fenn

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Dear Parents, Carers & Guardians

COVID-19 and its effect on household income – could your family be entitled to a little more support?

We are very aware that the COVID-19 outbreak will have a significant financial impact on many of our families. We would like to alert you to the following link, which gives advice on how you can access support:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/support-for-those-affected-by-covid-19/support-for-those-affected-by-covid-19>

You may be making a new claim for Universal Credit, or other income based benefits, or changing your claim because your salaried income has decreased. Perhaps, you have a child in years R, 1 or 2 and have never applied for income based free school meals because of the universal free school dinner system. However, if your family fits into one of the categories below, then it is possible that you may be entitled to free school meals for your school aged child/ren, which are currently being offered as a supermarket voucher scheme whilst schools are closed due to COVID-19.

These vouchers will be issued during school term times and only whilst schools are closed. When schools reopen and your circumstances have not changed, your child will continue to be entitled to a hot free school meal, provided by the school's catering company.

We understand that the value of the voucher will currently be £15 per South Avenue pupil, per week, so if you have more than one child at our school you will need to apply for each child.

This offer is to children in all year groups and is completely separate to the universal free school dinner system for years R, 1 and 2 and MUST be applied for.

Your child may be able to get free school meals if you get any of the following:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

Please check the information on the link below to see if you are eligible and to apply:

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/free-school-meals>

Collaboration, Challenge, Community, Courage, Commitment, Creativity

With the increase in new claims for Universal Credit etc, there may be a delay in your details reaching KCC Free School Meals, so if you believe you are eligible but the online system does not confirm this, please phone the FSM team on 03000 41 51 23 and they will be able to advise you further.

If you have difficulty accessing the link, please phone the school office (on 01795 477750 between 9-4pm) with your National Insurance number and we can make the online application for you.

We do not want you to miss out on this opportunity should you be entitled. Therefore, should your financial circumstances have changed and you feel that your child/ren may now be entitled to free school meals we would urge you to follow the link above. If you are eligible and make a successful application, please contact the school on the office number above, so that we can arrange vouchers for you. You must have a current active e-mail address registered on our system to receive the vouchers. If this has changed since you gave us your details then please make certain you advise us of this when you call.

Please be aware, that should your financial circumstances change during the coming months and you are no longer in receipt of any benefits, it will be your responsibility to advise the school and the KCC Free School Meal team. Failure to do this may result in you having to pay back the cost of any vouchers received/meals taken if you are no longer eligible.

Please be advised that we only have one member of staff in the office each day and, therefore, there may be times that you call and do not get through. Bear with us, we are only a skeleton staff trying to do all we can to support you and your children at this time. If it is more convenient, please e-mail office@southavenue.kent.sch.uk and let us know that you are eligible and the e-mail address to be used, which will be updated as the main e-mail address for all communication on our system.

If any families are not entitled to free school meals but are struggling financially and would like support from the local food bank then please text Mrs Lofts on 07544 243165 or e-mail Mrs Telford on ctelford@southavenue.kent.sch.uk who will be able to arrange a Food Bank Voucher for you. We know some families find it hard to ask for support, but it's at times like these we can all use a helping hand and we are here to offer support wherever we can.

Yours sincerely



Claire Telford
Assistant Headteacher – Community, Wellbeing & Safeguarding