BRACKENAGH WEST PRIMARY SCHOOL
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Free School Meals

There may be many of our pupils who could avail of free school meals who do not currently receive this benefit. **I would strongly encourage you to investigate whether your child might be eligible**, and to make an application if you think that you meet the criteria.

It is important to note that there are benefits to both families and to the school if a child is able to avail of free school meals, namely:

(a) The daily cost of a school meal (currently £2.60) is waived and you do not have to pay. Your child will then be eligible for a free school meal every day. However, your child does not have to take dinner every day if they don't want to. It is available as often, or as little, as you prefer.

(b) **The school benefits through extra funding** for every child that is eligible for free school meals. We receive in excess of £600 for each child that is on the free school meal register. **This is extremely important to us in today's climate of reduced Education budgets.**

I feel it is also important to note that none of the pupils are aware who takes free school meals, as we do not make any distinction between paid and free meals. The school meal register is completed by the class teacher each morning and *anyone* taking dinner that day is recorded. At no stage is there any differentiation between paid and free meals - the child simply has to say whether or not they are taking dinner that day.

A pupil shall be entitled to Free School Meals if you are in receipt of one of the following benefits:

* Income Support;
* Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance;
* Income Related Employment and Support Allowance;
* Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit;
* Child Tax Credit or Working Tax Credit with an annual taxable income of £16,190 or less;
* Universal credit and have net household earnings not exceeding £14,000 per year.
* If your child has a statement of SEN and is designated to require a special diet.

Please apply NOW if you think you may be eligible for free school meals, as this is something which benefits everyone. We need to make sure we get the maximum funding possible for the school. Even if your child rarely takes school dinner please apply; you

don’t have to avail of the dinners. **The school census is done in early October, so we need to ensure all applications have been processed by then**

Applications can be completed online, via the EANI website (link below). Paper forms are also available.

https://www.eani.org.uk/financial-help/free-school-meals-uniform-grants

If your child was in receipt of free school meals last year should have been sent a form to re-apply for this year.

Please consider applying if you think you may be eligible.

Kind regards,

Mr Peacock