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Your Ref

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Dear Parent/Carer

As we approach the end of term I just wanted to get in touch to say thank you so much for your patience, understanding and support during our first term of operating in a different, Covid-secure way. We hope you have some time to relax during the holiday period and look forward to welcoming all of our children and young people back after the break. I've recorded a short clip which you can view on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/3k812iLT3DY>

The holidays are a good time to reinforce the message that those over the age of 12 should be physically distancing in public spaces as much as possible – we know it's different to school where distancing within year groups can be more difficult and it can be confusing, but if you're out and about together please take the opportunity to talk about that all important 'it's not all or nothing' message – every little helps and when in public places this helps to make others feel more comfortable – if you're following the rules and respecting their space – too.

We are also pleased to update everyone that Aberdeenshire Council is to provide school meal payments directly to eligible families in the absence of holiday hunger schemes during the October holiday period.

The local authority will continue to use its Scottish Government Food Fund allocation to support families to access this free school meal provision in the same way as it did during the summer period. In addition to the £2.50 payment per lunch per day, a £1 breakfast payment will also be allocated.

Families already in receipt of free school meals – not those offered universally in P1-3 – will automatically receive the payment of £17.50 per child per week and do not need to do anything new to register. Payments will be issued on Monday 12 October although there may be some variation as to when this appears in individuals' bank accounts.

The Council is able to make this payment to families in the same way as is done for school clothing grants. This only applies to families who are eligible for clothing grants too.

If you are facing financial hardship and believe you may now be eligible for free school meals, please apply online through Aberdeenshire Council's website. Eligibility is usually based on whether you are in receipt of one of the following qualifying benefits or allowances:

- Income Support
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)
- Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit)
- Any income-related element of Employment Support Allowance

- Child Tax Credit (CTC), but not Working Tax Credit (WTC), and have an income of less than £16,105
- Child Tax Credit (CTC) and Working Tax Credit (WTC), and have an income of less than £6900
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
- Universal Credit with a monthly take home pay of less than £610.

If you are not able to apply online, contact the Council on 01467 533400.

I hope this finds you well and thanks again for your support.

Yours sincerely



**Laurence Findlay**  
**Director of Education & Children's Services**