



Dear Parents / Carers

Ref: Free School Meals

In our experience not everyone who is entitled to free school meals feels able to apply for them. I would very much like to encourage everyone who qualifies to take advantage of this service. School meals at St Bernard's offer healthy nutritious food, hot and cold, prepared and cooked freshly every day. The daily free school meal allowance of £3.00 is enough to buy a full hot meal. Students learn better and have more energy for their studies when they eat at regular intervals.

Details of our menus and theme days can be found on the website. You could be entitled to free school meals if you are in receipt of any of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- support under Part V1 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (if not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income of less than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit 'run-on' - the payment someone may receive for a further four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit Further details can be found on the council website.

If your daughter was receiving free schools in her primary school and this will be continuing, then please ensure that you have completed the details on the enclosed admissions form for the person claiming the benefit with their name, date of birth and national insurance number. If this is the first claim for free school meals, please complete an application via the local council website: Southend Borough Council (www.southend.gov.uk/fsm).

I appreciate that the forms can often seem intrusive or long winded however every step of the process is handled sensitively and confidentially. Subsequently renewals of free school meals will be verified on a six monthly basis by the school following the Universal Credit roll-out. If assistance is needed or you want to seek confidential advice you can contact the Children and Families department on 01702 215000 or by email at council@southend.gov.uk or alternatively you can contact our Free School Meals Administrator here at St Bernard's who will be happy to assist you.

Yours faithfully

Mrs H Barnes

Headteacher