

Date: 14 January 2021

Free School Meals – West Berkshire Council Statement

Across the media there has been much publicity about plainly sub-standard food parcels sent to school children at home who would normally get free school meals.

During the national lockdown, our schools will continue to support children eligible for benefits-related free school meals who are at home during term time.

Cllr Dominic Boeck, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education at West Berkshire Council, said: “It is important that all children in all schools are given good wholesome food that is enough for their needs. I am determined that children who are entitled to free school meals are given food of the right quality while they are learning at home.

“Schools and their governors are responsible for school meals and they have the freedom to decide on the best approach for their pupils. If there are any problems we are ready to support them.

“Over Christmas we distributed 3,600 food vouchers to make sure children at home had enough. We have asked all our schools if they would like us to provide them with vouchers until the Department for Education relaunch their scheme.”

Schools will continue to receive their expected funding for benefits-related free school meals throughout this lockdown period. The current funding for schools to cover the additional cost for pupils at home is:

- up to £3.50 per eligible pupil, per week, where lunch parcels are being provided
- up to £15 per eligible pupil, per week, where vouchers for local shops or supermarkets are being provided

Further information and guidance on school meals during the COVID-19 outbreak is available on the [government website](#).

