



# St James' Church of England Primary School

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Head Teacher: **Mrs Gina Bailey**

Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2020

## Parent Update

Dear Parents and Carers,

Sorry for not writing to you all – as you can imagine things have been a little busy in school!!

I hope this update finds you all safe and well, and you are not all suffering too much from cabin fever!! All the staff are missing the children already, so please say hello to them all for us!!!

### Free School Meals

As you know, schools across the UK are now closed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government have asked school and nurseries to provide care for those who are vulnerable and to those children whose parents are 'critical workers to the COVID-19 response'.

We know that many of our families depend on the support given by their school and that this is a difficult time for many. Some of our children depend on their school meal everyday and the Government have asked us to continue to support these children.

Gavin Williamson, Education Secretary, said: "No child who would ordinarily receive a 'means tested' free school meal should go without while their school is closed.'

### What is a 'means tested' free school meal?

Children usually qualify for free school meals if their parents get certain benefits, such as Universal Credit or working tax credit. We call this 'means tested'. These children then receive the Government Pupil Premium Grant – part of this grant provides the child with free school meals every day.

These are the children who will be receiving school meals during this time of school closure either in the form of a food package or a supermarket voucher. Your school will have contacted you if your child qualifies for a 'means tested' school meal.

### What is a universal free school meal?

In 2014, the Government introduced a policy of universal free school meals providing a free lunch to all children in the first three years of primary school regardless of their family's financial circumstances. These children will not be receiving school meals during this time of closure.



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If you feel that your family do qualify for 'means tested' free school meals and you haven't already registered with your school then please do check the government website.

Only children who usually receive a 'means tested' free school meal will be provided with food during this school closure.

#### Food Parcels or Food Vouchers?

Due to food shortages in shops locally, the school has made the decision to provide food parcels to children entitled to means tested free school meals. Parents who are entitled to this have been contacted directly and parcels have either been collected by parents or delivered to families who are self-isolating.

We will review this after the Easter holidays, if the situation has improved we will move over to food vouchers.

#### Key Workers

I would like to thank all the staff for their amazing commitment to Education, by continuing to provide care for our Critical Worker families. Between our two schools we are providing care for 25 children regularly which is an amazing achievement in such challenging times.

#### Parental Support

Mrs Coote and Mrs Walsham have been in regular contact with families needing support, many thanks to them for helping so many families.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Gina Bailey  
Executive Headteacher



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