

For the attention of School Principals, School Management Bodies and Managers regarding the School Meals Programme.

Minister for Social Protection, Heather Humphreys TD, confirmed on Wednesday that funding for the School Meals Programme will remain in place during the current period of school closures.

This mirrors the arrangements that were in place during the school closures in 2020, when the majority of schools in the School Meals Programme continued to provide food to children, largely through the home delivery of food parcels by suppliers.

The Department appreciates the huge contribution and work by schools and organisations in managing the school meals programme during these challenging times. The arrangements will not change from when schools/organisations closed previously: namely that the schools/organisations may continue to avail of the funding and they may continue to provide food consistent with normal funding terms and conditions. Schools/organisations must ensure that they continue to satisfy all public health guidelines.

Schools/Organisations should examine if the delivery model in place following education setting closures in 2020 can be resumed. Appreciating the changing times, each school/organisation has the autonomy to arrange a delivery model that best suits their school/organisation and their children. In this regard, how the food packs are provided to the children and how often the packs are provided can be decided by the school/organisation.

The second instalment of school meals funding will be issued on the 08/01/2021 and there is no extra funding available to that already allocated to the individual schools and organisations. Funding is allocated per meal, per child, per day and food parcels can be prepared up to this amount.

Each local authority is coordinating Community Support Network Programmes to assist with volunteer efforts. School principals may contact the Community Call forum if they wish to enlist support through the local community & voluntary groups to assist. Contact details: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/1f06f7-covid-19-community-call-local-authority-helpline-numbers-and-email-a/>

Staff in Local Development Companies can also assist schools in linking to services locally as required. The full list of all Local Development Companies across the country, with contact details can be found at <https://ildn.ie/directory/>

If you require any clarification on this please email school.meals@welfare.ie or telephone 071 9138625.

EMAIL FROM SOCIAL INCLUSION TO SCHOOLS WHO AVAILED OF PRE-BOOKING SYSTEM WITH AN POST

A Chara,

As you know the Department of Social Protection has issued communication to schools that the school meals programme is continuing should schools wish to avail of it.

I am contacting you as your school was one of the schools that used the An Post pre-booking system managed by the Department during the school closure in 2020. An Post facilitated the delivery of over 17,000 packages during school closures but due to service demand are not in a position to continue to offer a complimentary service at this time. (Post can still be used but that would have to be done independently at individual school level and would incur a charge to the school at the post office; alternatively your supplier may have a direct arrangement in place).

If your school opts to continue with the provision of the School Meals Programme to the students who are deemed to be most in need of this support during the current school closure and you wish to source alternative no cost options, the following information may be useful.

Each local authority is coordinating Community Support Network Programmes to assist with volunteer efforts. School principals may contact the Community Call forum if they wish to enlist support through the local community & voluntary groups to assist. Contact details: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/1f06f7-covid-19-community-call-local-authority-helpline-numbers-and-email-a/>

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