



# St. Anthony's Girls' Catholic Academy

*A Mercy Academy committed to excellence*

St. Anthony's Girls' Catholic Academy, Thornhill Terrace, Sunderland SR2 7JN.  
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Mrs F. Collins  
Senior Assistant Head Teacher  
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Dear Parent/Carer

January 2018

I am writing to inform you that with effect from Monday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2018 the price of a school meal will increase from £1.90 to £2.00 per day. The academy has not implemented a price rise since 2010, but due to the rising costs of food suppliers an increase is necessary. This change will not affect children who are in receipt of free school meals. They will be provided with a free meal up to the value of £2.00. This price continues to represent good value for money for a two course, freshly cooked school meal.

## Free School Meals

The Local Authority Together for Children launched a new Family Portal to enable parents and carers to make an online application for free school meals. An online application process will offer the following benefits to parents and carers:

- to create a secure account to record information about themselves and their family that they can then update at any time with changes to their circumstances
- receive an instant response to their application to inform them if they are eligible
- receive secure correspondence about any applications that they make and changes to their eligibility
- the ability to apply for other benefits at the same time for example a free 2 year old childcare place

If your child is eligible for a free school meal then there are a number of important reasons why you should make the claim to the school.

**Providing a daily free meal** – If you qualify for a free school meal then the school will provide a free meal up to the value of £2.00 every day. This really is an offer too good to miss! The Dining Rooms under the guidance of Ms Forster provide nutritional and healthy food options with a variety of goods available each day.

**Cashless Catering** – The introduction of a system which allows food to be purchased simply by fingerprint recognition has provided a benefit in two different ways.

a) All pupils are registered on the system and can pay an amount of money into the cash machine at any time or you can use the ParentPay facility. When collecting their meals, they simply have their fingerprint swiped and their account is deducted by the amount of the meal. This has made the queuing system much more effective and reduces times in the queue. No cash changes hands at the kitchen tills.

b) It is suggested that one of the reasons that parents may not receive that which they are entitled to is the perceived stigma attached to obtaining a meal using a free ticket. Using our cashless catering system removes any indication that the meal is provided free as pupils are automatically credited with the cash in their account and they use exactly the same technique as everybody else. There simply is NO reason why free meals shouldn't be claimed if you are eligible.





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**Pupil Premium** – The government have recently changed the way schools are funded and the capitation allowance is heavily influenced by the new Pupil Premium. This is an amount of money (a serious amount!) which is allocated to school based on the financial circumstances of the families which it serves.

The indication of whether the pupil premium is to be awarded is based on the number of pupils on free school meals. Therefore, additional funding coming into the school to provide better facilities for teaching and learning is based on how many of our parents who are claiming the free school meal allowance that they are entitled to.

As you can perhaps see, the advantages of claiming free school meals are many and, as well as ensuring that pupils are getting a healthy meal every day, we are also able to provide better facilities, books, computers, classrooms and many other benefits for the pupils. It is to the advantage of every pupil in school that all parents who are eligible to claim for free school meals should do so – even if your child does not take the free meal!

## DO YOU QUALIFY?

Parents do not have to pay for school lunches if they receive any of the following:

- Income Support
- Universal Credit
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part V1 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The Guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit, provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income (as assessed by HM Revenue & Customs) that does not exceed £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
- Children who receive any of the qualifying benefits listed above in their own right are also eligible to receive free school meals

Parents should visit the following website to make their application:

<https://www.togetherforchildren.org.uk/families/free-school-meals>

There is a step-by-step guide to making an application which is available to download from the website.

***No one will know you have registered and it will not affect any other benefits you are claiming.***

The Free School Meals team Tel: (0191) 561 1417 can help with any questions that you have.

Yours sincerely

*M. Shepherd.*

Mrs M Shepherd  
Head Teacher

