



Earith Primary School

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Dear Parents and Carers

The Government funds schools in England to provide every child in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 with a nutritious meal at lunchtime. The aim is to improve academic attainment and save families money.

Universal free school meals for primary school pupils were a key recommendation in the School Food Plan (www.schoolfoodplan.com), which was produced independently for the Department for Education.

A universal free school meals pilot was undertaken from 2009 to 2011 in Durham and Newham, East London. All primary school children in these areas were given free lunches and data was collected to assess whether, and how, it affected their health and academic performance. Every school in the pilot reported benefits to behavior, concentration levels and performance in the classroom, therefore, improved academic performance.

Universal free school meals will have benefits for a vast number of families.

- It will ensure that all Key Stage 1 children are offered a healthy meal in the middle of the day, giving every child the benefit of a hot, tasty nutritious meal at lunchtime so that they are ready to learn.
- Everyone benefits in the classroom; schools that participated in the pilot found that all children having a school meal benefited the whole class, as it improved concentration and performance in the classroom, therefore improved academic results across the whole class.
- Children will have the opportunity to all eat a healthy meal together at lunchtime, whilst at the same time developing the social skills of eating together. Studies suggest that young children eating a healthy meal together at lunchtime can improve social skills and encourages positive eating habits.
- If your child has a special dietary requirement, this can be accommodated by following a simple procedure. Parents or carers will need to complete our special diet request form and provide a letter from the GP confirming the dietary restriction. Only by having access to this important information can we ensure that the meals provided are 'safe' and conform to the pupil's dietary requirements. If however, your child has other dietary requirements, say on religious grounds, then please let us know and we will liaise with the catering team to ensure their needs are met.

If you have any further questions or concerns please come and speak to us at school.

Sian Pritchard
Headteacher