

## Record of operational decision

**UPDATED March 2020: Decisions in relation Covid-19 should be published on the same day as the decision or at the very latest 24 hrs later.**

<b>Decision title:</b>	Decision to reimburse schools who fund the cost of up to £15 per week for free school meals during the February 2021 half term school holidays for one week and £33 in total for the eleven day Easter school holiday period for c.3,200 eligible children.
<b>Date of decision:</b>	13 January 2021
<b>Decision maker:</b>	Director for Children and Families
<b>Authority for delegated decision:</b>	Council constitution 3.7.9 all necessary decisions in the case of emergencies
<b>Ward:</b>	Countywide
<b>Consultation:</b>	Consulted with the Cabinet Member for Children and Families who supports the decision Consulted with the Section 151 officer who has given approval and notes that this should be funded from the COVID-19 grant.
<b>Decision made:</b>	Agreed to reimburse schools who fund £15 per week for children eligible for free school meals. Numbers identified are c.3,200 but this is likely to increase as more families identify themselves.
<b>Reasons for decision:</b>	Government funding to schools for free school meals does not cover the February half term nor Easter school holidays. Not providing free school meal funding during the holiday could increase the risk of hardship to children who rely on the school meal to provide a good meal each day and is made more necessary as part of the COVID-19 response.  There is no indication at present that national government intends to provide free school meal funding for the February (5 days) or Easter 2021 (11 days) holiday period although subject to COVID restrictions an Easter holiday activity scheme may be arranged with DfE funding. Pupils attending the DfE funded activity scheme will not be double funded for free meals. If national government does decided to provide funding then this will be used rather than the council's funding to cover this expenditure.
<b>Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:</b>	The decision provides support for children eligible for free school meals; a vulnerable group at a time of pressure and hardship on a significant number of families due to COVID-19 impact, including restrictions on the ability of parents to earn due to the national lockdown. This has greater impact on those on lower pay. The potential cost for the identified children is c.£48,000 for the five day February half term; c.£105,600 the eleven day Easter holiday (excluding weekends). The potential amount will be reviewed and the cabinet member for children and young people and the Section 151 officer will be informed of any potential variance to this estimated figure. The decision will be coordinated with the use of the Winter COVID grant and hardship fund within the council and the plans through Talk Community to support children and families in these circumstances.
<b>Details of any alternative options considered and</b>	To not fund This could leave a significant number of children potentially without food during the February half term school holiday or during the Easter holidays.

<b>rejected:</b>	
<b>Details of any declarations of interest made:</b>	N/A

Signed

Chris Baird  
Director for children and families

Date: 13 January 2021