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New Free School Meal voucher scheme introduced

Knowsley Council has introduced a new voucher scheme for Knowsley school children who receive free school meals.

Following the closure of schools on Friday 20 March, the council has been supplying packed lunches on a daily basis to those children who are eligible for free school meals.

This new voucher scheme will help to ensure that those children will still have access to food and will also help parents, carers and employees with their social distancing, as they will be able to use the vouchers during their essential shopping trips.

All schools in Knowsley have registered for this scheme and will be issuing vouchers to parents and carers via a text message. Initially, the vouchers will be issued on a fortnightly basis. Primary pupils' parents/carers will receive a voucher for £32.20 and secondary pupils' parents/carers will receive a voucher for £32.90.

The vouchers can be spent at Asda, Morrison's, Sainsbury's and Tesco supermarkets, with more being added in the next few weeks.

Cllr Margaret Harvey, Knowsley's Cabinet Member for Children's Services said: "During these exceptional circumstances, while schools are only operating as a last resort childcare for children of key workers, it's really important that we ensure that all those children entitled to free school meals are able to get the food they need. The council is fully funding this new voucher scheme to help support those families in greatest need and ensure that they can still buy the food they need for their children."

The new voucher system will be in place from Monday 30th March and is fully funded by Knowsley Council. It will remain in place until the Government implements a national scheme.

If you are a parent or carer and have any questions about the text message you have received about your voucher, or if you believe your child is entitled to free school meals and should have received a text message and haven't, you should contact your school office.

If you are self-isolating and unable to leave the house, please follow the advice about asking a relative, friend or neighbour to help with your essential shopping. You will be able to forward the voucher to a person who is helping you and they can redeem it for you.

More advice is available here <https://www.knowsleynews.co.uk/coronavirus-what-you-need-to-know/>

Mrs J. Mousley

Yours sincerely

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