Dear Head teacher/School Business Manager,

**IMPORTANT SCHOOLS FUNDING UPDATE**

For the financial year 2021/22 the Department of Education (DfE) changed the census point that the Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) was allocated to schools and academies, it changed from the January census to the October 2020 school census. As a result of this change some schools and academies experienced significant reductions in their PPG funding.

The funding given to maintained schools and academies through the schools national funding formula in the financial year 2021/22 under the “FMS6” factor continued to be based upon the January school census (January 2020). However, to realign the basis upon which both funding streams are allocated the DFE have announced in “The national funding formulae for schools and high needs 2022-23” that **from the financial year 2022/23 the FSM6 factor in the schools NFF will be allocated based upon the number of pupils who have been eligible for free school meals at any time in the last six years based on the pupils on the October 2021 school census**. Noted below is **Table 1** showing which census points are to be used in the allocation of funding under the schools NFF – FSM6 factor and the PPG.

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| **Table 1: School Censuses used for the allocation of funding** |
| **Funding Stream** | **FY 2021/22** | **FY 2022/23** | **FY 2023/24** |
| Schools NFF – FSM6 factor | January 2020 School Census | October 2021 School Census | October 2022 School Census |
| Pupil Premium Grant | October 2020 School Census | October 2021 School Census | October 2022 School Census |

In an effort to try and maximise the PPG funding and FSM6 factor funding that schools and academies receive in the financial year 2022/23 and the **Local Authority is encouraging schools and academies to ask** **their parents/carers who have not yet applied for free school meals to check to see if they think they meet the eligibility criteria and if they do ask them to apply for free school meals as soon as possible at the beginning of the Autumn Term 2021. By doing this at the start of the Autumn Term 2021 this will hopefully enable all applications to be processed by the Pupil Benefits Team before the census day on 7 October 2021.**

**Please can we ask that you only encourage parents/carers to apply who think that they meet the criteria** as the Pupil Benefits Team in the past have received substantial numbers of applications from parents whose children were not eligible and this slows down the process as every application has to be checked for eligibility for each benefit. As a result of this applications for pupils who are eligible may be delayed to be processed and miss the deadline for the October school census. In addition, the pupil is delayed in receiving his/her free school meals and the school/academy could miss out on potential funding through the schools NFF and the PPG.

To try and assist schools in this task NCC Schools IT have generated a file for schools/academies that use SIMS to ascertain which pupils are not eligible for free school meals, FSM6 or PP. A copy of the file along with guidance notes on how to run the file will be sent to schools that use SIMS. For those schools/academies that use either Scholar Pack or Arbour guidance notes on how to run a report to find out which pupils are not eligible for free school meals, FSM6 or PP. **The relevant file and guidance notes will be emailed out to head teachers and business managers on 1 September 2021.**

Once you have ascertained which pupils are not eligible for free school meals, FSM6 or PP, you will be able to target your efforts on the parents/carers of these pupils and send them a letter asking them to apply for free school meals if they feel they meet the eligibility criteria. Please find attached a draft letter to parents/carers you may wish to use or you may prefer to draft your own letter.

**It is important to note that if that if parents are in receipt of Working Tax Credit, regardless of what their annual income is, their child is not entitled to free school meals, so it is important to check this first.**

During the COVID-19 restrictions some schools and academies completed application forms on the behalf of parents/carers once the parent/carer had given consent to do so. The Pupil Benefits Team have confirmed that they will continue to accept applications made on this basis if schools wish to continue to do this.

We appreciate that this task requires a very short turnaround time but hopefully by working together we will maximise the funding that your school/academy attracts.

Moving forward this task will need to be completed annually to make sure that all potential free school meal pupils have applied in advance of the October school census to maximise your funding.

If you have any queries please contact the relevant contact below.

Schools IT Tel: 0115 91550900 Email: schoolsit@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Helena Bradfield Towlson– Pupil Benefits Team Tel: 0115 9154084 Monday to Friday 8.30am to 1.30pm Email: Pupil.benefits@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

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