

## **A new online Free School Meals System**

This letter is for you if your child or children are currently eligible, or may be eligible, for free school meals under the benefit criteria.

Worcestershire Children First are inviting you to use a new self-service process to manage free school meals applications and keep you up to date with any changes.

**For anyone who is currently eligible and receives free school meals, there will be no changes or loss of eligibility until at least July 2023 even if your personal circumstances have changed.**

### **What do you need to do?**

The system uses the same portal you used to apply for your child's school place. You should use your admission application login details on the Citizen Portal to apply for Free School Meals. You can access the portal using this link:

[https://emsi.worcestershire.gov.uk/CitizenPortal\\_LIVE/en?ReturnURL=%2FCitizenPortal\\_LIVE%2F](https://emsi.worcestershire.gov.uk/CitizenPortal_LIVE/en?ReturnURL=%2FCitizenPortal_LIVE%2F)

If you do not currently have a Citizen Portal account, please follow the on-screen instructions to register an account.

We need your permission to communicate with you in this way, so we need you to use the portal, enter your details and make an application. This will mean reapplying for Free School Meals for your child(ren) but please do not be concerned that this will affect current arrangements - all eligible families are protected until at least July 2023. Using the portal will not change this, it's just so that we can communicate with you.

Once you have applied using the new system, you will receive a confirmation message that your application has been received and is being processed. You will then receive further notifications via the Citizens Portal as your application progresses.

### **Why have we developed a new system?**

A key part of the new system is the ability for parents to receive updates on their application and ongoing status without delay via email and portal messages.

### **What about Universal Free School Meals?**

Universal Infant Free School meals for pupils in Reception, Y1 and Y2 will continue to be managed by the school and are not managed via the Portal.

### **Any questions or concerns?**

If you have any questions or comments about this new process, please contact the Free School Meal team via [freeschoolmeals@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:freeschoolmeals@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk).

Thank you, and we look forward to receiving your application

**The Free School Meals Team, Worcestershire Children First**