HELP PAYING FOR CHILDCARE FOR ELIGIBLE FAMILIES TO SUPPORT AFTER-SCHOOL CLUB COSTS

Those of you who currently use the school's after-school club (A-SC) may not be aware that there is a Government Scheme that can provide financial support to the cost of using the A-SC. This equally applies to those who may decide to use the A-SC in the future as a result of this potential support.

It is called Tax Free Childcare (TFC) and it can contribute 20% to childcare costs for a child until the 1st September after their 11th birthday.

Our school is already registered for the receipt of TFC payments.

TFC was set up a few years ago to replace the childcare original voucher scheme. That scheme was quite generous but less flexible than TFC.

At present, TFC is only used by one family in the school. We thought it would be useful to create this newsletter article to remind parents of its availability, especially in view of the challenging times we are all experiencing.

https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/how-to-use-tax-free-childcare/

The above link will take you to a very helpful website which guides you through the application process as well as clarify the eligibility criteria.

We have also been provided with a most helpful insight into how the scheme works by a parent who uses TFC (see box to the right). The school office can also provide further information on the Scheme if there are any questions arising after viewing the guidance and YouTube video on the above link.

The school office will make sure that the payment arrives in the school A-SC account at the appropriate time. All that you have to do is make the payment from your TFC account on the "….GOV.UK" website.

If you do sign up to the TFC Scheme, please let the school office know, via the A-SC Gmail address, providing your User ID details (not password) which will then be used to reconcile the payment when it arrives in the school account.

NB The link below was recently updated and provides additional useful information particularly relevant to benefits and eligibility.

https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/family/tax-free-childcare/

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We asked our current sole TFC user to provide an insight into the scheme from a user's viewpoint. We think you will agree that, after reading the paragraphs below, it is well worth considering the TFC scheme if you are eligible.

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"In terms of setting the account up, I don't recall any complications, it was quite straightforward.

It was one of those things that you put off doing but is nothing like as complicated as you think it will be.

Just make sure you have the documents to hand when you do it. The site tells you what you will need before you start the process. I think it tells you immediately whether you qualify.

One point to note is that when you get your login, make sure you keep a note. I have gateway logins for other things, and they can get mixed up, especially if your computer tries to remember the right one!

Once set up, using the account is very easy. Select 'Manage Account', then choose to 'pay money in' and you can then do so either using bank details provided, or with a debit card (the latter will take 2 days to clear). The Government effectively adds 25% of what you pay, so remember to take this off the invoice you want to settle (i.e. 20% of the total invoice).

(eg for a £100 A-SC invoice, you will pay £80 into your TFC account and Government will immediately credit your TFC account with £20.)

When the funds are cleared they will show in the account and you can choose to make a payment to the childcare provider. The first time you do this you need to click 'add a childcare provider', then type in the name of the school in the search box and it comes up.

Once added it is saved below the account details and you can set up a new payment. After the first time, the account will have saved the payee. Then it is just a case of entering the amount and making a one-off payment.

Compared with some other government websites I use, it's a doddle!"