

To Parents/Carers of pupils in  
Cambridgeshire Schools and Early Years  
Settings

**People & Communities**  
Education Directorate

Dear Parent/Carer

### **Cambridgeshire Holiday Voucher Scheme**

At the Full Council meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> February, the Joint Administration of the Council proposed investing £3.6m to continue our direct voucher scheme for a further year. The council recognises the pressure on households as we emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic as well as the current inflationary price rises. As a result, we will be providing each eligible child with a voucher for each of the holiday periods up until February 2023 half term. We will write before each holiday with the details of the scheme. This letter outlines our scheme for the Easter Holidays.

#### Eligibility Criteria

As for previous holiday periods, a supermarket voucher will be allocated to parents/carers whose child/ren meet the following criteria -

- Funded Childcare and Education for 2-year-olds under the income-based criteria (children aged 2)
- Early Years Pupil Premium under the income-based criteria (children aged 3 and 4)
- Free School Meals (children and young people aged 4 to 16)
- Students in Sixth Forms eligible for Free School meals or for the 16+ bursary (young people aged 16 to 19)

If your child receives Universal Infant Free School Meals (in Reception, Y1 and Y2) but you do not meet the criteria for Income-Related Free School Meals, you will **not** be eligible for a supermarket voucher.

For eligible young people attending Sixth Form Colleges / Further Education establishments, information on how support will be offered will be sent directly by the college. If your child accesses their education outside Cambridgeshire, please [visit our website](#) for details on how you can claim.

A detailed list of criteria and information on [how to apply for income-related Free School Meals](#) are attached to this letter. Further information is also available at [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals/](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals/)

#### How the vouchers work

We will issue each eligible child/young person with a £30 supermarket voucher by the end of the day on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> April to cover the Easter holiday period. The voucher will be sent by email and/or text to the nominated parent or carer. The voucher does not need to be used in a single shopping trip and once claimed will last for at least a year.

If your child is eligible for income-related Free School Meals, or any of the other criteria listed above, on or before the 24<sup>th</sup> March, they will automatically receive a voucher for the Easter holidays. Any

children who become eligible up until the 19<sup>th</sup> April 2023 will receive a voucher. This will be sent as and when we are notified of this change in circumstance.

Details of the supermarkets which will accept the vouchers and how the voucher scheme works can be found in the frequently asked questions document sent with this letter. As a result of the conditions of the grant, **all** unclaimed Easter vouchers will be withdrawn on the **13<sup>th</sup> May**. Once you select a supermarket, the voucher will not be withdrawn and will be valid in line with the date on the voucher claimed. If you **do not** wish to receive the food vouchers, please let your school or setting know as soon as possible so that we can reallocate them. If you would like information and ideas on how to eat more healthily as a family, NHS Change4life has lots of useful information - <https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/recipes>.

If your child was eligible on or before the 24<sup>th</sup> March and you have not received your voucher **by 6pm on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> April** or have any queries about this scheme, please contact [winter.support@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:winter.support@cambridgeshire.gov.uk). Please include in any correspondence the name of your child, their date of birth and which education establishment they attend. This will avoid a delay in responding to your query.

### Holiday Activities and Food Scheme

The Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF) offers eligible family's free childcare over the Easter holidays. Each participating holiday scheme provider offers a variety of activities, experiences and sports to take part in as well as the opportunity for children to socialise, have fun and receive a free meal. Vouchers were issued on 28 February to eligible families for the Easter holiday HAF Programme which offers a free childcare place with one of our providers for 16 hours. The voucher has a £0.00 value shown as it is issued to prove eligibility for your child to attend the Easter HAF Programme. Please select 'Cambridgeshire Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF) – Easter 2022' as the retailer and proceed through the screens to find your booking code. You will then be able to browse our Provider Directory and book your child's place with a local holiday scheme.

- Please [click on this link](#) for 'A How to Guide' on how to redeem your voucher.
- For more information relating to the HAF Programme please visit this link [Parents HAF Webpage](#)
- If you have any questions, please email the HAF Team: [HAF@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:HAF@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

### Other Support

We understand that there are many families eligible for the Direct Food Voucher Scheme that may need further support. We also know there will be families who don't meet the above criteria but need support. We have put together some information on the organisations offering wider support on our website which you can find here –

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/household-support-fund>

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Bryony Goodliffe  
Chair, Children and Young People Committee

## Appendix 1 – Eligibility for Direct Voucher Scheme

### Parents eligible for Funded Childcare and Education for 2-year-olds under the income-based criteria (children aged 2)

In order to qualify you must be in receipt of one of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Universal Credit, and your household income is £15,400 a year or less after tax, not including benefit payments
- Tax credits, and your household income is £16,190 a year or less before tax
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- The Working Tax Credit 4-week run on (the payment you get when you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)

<https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/free-childcare-2-year-olds>

### Parents eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium under the income-based criteria (children aged 3 and 4)

In order to qualify you must be in receipt of one of the following benefits:

- [Income Support](#)
- Income-based [Jobseeker's Allowance](#)
- Income-related [Employment and Support Allowance](#)
- Support under [part six of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999](#)
- The guaranteed element of [State Pension Credit](#)
- [Child Tax Credit](#) (provided you are not also entitled to [Working Tax Credit](#)) and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190

- [Working Tax Credit](#) run-on, which is paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit - your household income must be less than £7,400 a year after tax not including any benefits you get

<https://www.gov.uk/get-extra-early-years-funding>

### Parents eligible for Free School Meals (children and young people aged 4 to 16)

In order to qualify you must be in receipt of one of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit - if you applied on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

Children who get paid these benefits directly, instead of through a parent or guardian, can also get Free School Meals.

If you wish to apply for a Free school meal, please apply online at [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals)

## Eligible for 16-19 Free School Meals

Students must be in receipt of, or having parents who are in receipt of, one or more of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190, as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC))
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after someone stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400 per annum (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

[Free meals in further education funded institutions: guide for the 2021 to 2022 academic year - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/free-meals-in-further-education-funded-institutions-guide-for-the-2021-to-2022-academic-year)

## Other Eligibility

Children in care are not covered by the scheme as the costs of meals in the holidays are covered by fostering allowances.

The definition of a child is any person:

- who will be under the age of 19 as at 31 March 2022 or
- a person aged 19 or over in respect of whom a child-related benefit (for example, Child Benefit) is paid or Free School Meals are provided.

## How to Claim Free School Meals

We understand that families continue to live in uncertain times, and many are facing changes to their financial circumstances as a result. If you have not previously applied for Free School Meals, or your name has recently changed, and feel you now meet the criteria below, please visit [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals](https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals) to apply online;

- Income Support.
- Income-based Job Seeker's Allowance.
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance.
- Child Tax Credit - but no element of Working Tax Credit - and have an annual income (as assessed by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC)) that does not exceed £16,190.
- If you are supported under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
- Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit.
- Working Tax Credit during the four-week period immediately after your employment finishes or after you start to work fewer hours per week.
- Universal Credit with an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400.

## **Website for the Cambridgeshire Holiday Voucher Scheme**

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/schools-learning/help-with-school-learning-costs/cambridgeshire-holiday-voucher-scheme>