

My ref: Household Support – Autumn Half Term CCC
Date: 13th October 2021
Contact: Please contact your school
for more information

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

Dear Parent/Carer

Household Support Fund and Autumn Half Term

On the 30th September, the government announced the new Household Support Fund, to support vulnerable households over the winter months as they continue to recover from the pandemic. Eligible spend includes support with food and, in line with previous rounds of grant funding, we are pleased to announce that we will be continuing to support financially vulnerable families via our Direct Food Voucher Scheme. This will cover the autumn half term which starts on the 25th October. The Household Support Fund runs until March 2022 and we will also be providing vouchers for the Christmas holidays and February half term.

Direct Food Voucher Scheme

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.

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.

How the vouchers work

We will issue each eligible child/young person with a £15 supermarket voucher by the end of the day on 22nd October for the autumn half term. 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 shown above, on or before the 11th October, they will automatically receive a voucher for the autumn half term period. Any children who become eligible up until the 22nd October will receive a voucher and this will be sent as and when we are notified.

Details of the supported supermarkets and how E-vouchers works can be found in the frequently asked questions document sent with this letter. Please note that **all** unclaimed autumn half term vouchers will be withdrawn on the **3rd December**. 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 11th October and you have not received your voucher **by the 25th October** or have any queries about this scheme, please contact 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.

Wider Support

We understand that as a result of the pandemic, 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 are in need of support. Therefore, there is a network of hubs run by the city and district councils that will be able to help you to access further support. Details of support in your local area can be found below:

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/wintersupport

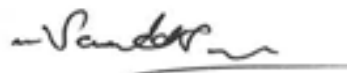
This support can include information and advice, as well as further food and fuel support or access to other essential supplies.

If you are unable to access the information online, you can call your local hub on 0345 045 5219. The team is available Monday – Friday 9am-5pm.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Bryony Goodliffe
Chair, Children and Young People Committee



Councillor Tom Sanderson
Chair, Communities, Social Mobility and
Inclusion 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 apply 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 or www.peterborough.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals

Eligible for 16-19 Free School Meals

Free meals in further education defines disadvantage as students being 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 guarantee 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 pa (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/guidance/free-meals-in-further-education-funded-institutions-guide-for-the-2021-to-2022-academic-year)

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 below criteria, please visit www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals to apply online;

- Income Support.
- Income Based Job Seekers 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.
- Guarantee element of State Pension Credit.
- Working Tax Credit during the four week period immediately after your employment finishes or after you start to work less hours per week.
- Universal Credit with an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400.

Also schools are continuing to provide support for eligible families, in the form of either food parcels or vouchers, during this period where pupils are unable to attend. Your school will be able to confirm the support that they are offering. The form is simple to complete and will give you an immediate response.