

Dear Parent/Guardian

Free School Meals during Winter 2021-22

As you may be aware Bath and North East Somerset Council provided funding to support benefit related free school meals during school holidays throughout the lockdown period by issuing vouchers to parents. The Local Authority is looking to provide similar support during the holiday weeks through the winter period 2021-22.

The Local Authority has been provided with Hardship Funding by the government to support families in need and we have decided to utilise part of this funding to support vouchers for Free School Meals entitled pupils during the October, Christmas holiday periods. It is also our intention to support the February half term period should the resources available allow it.

Further information on additional support to families will also be sent to those families whose children are in receipt of free school meals. This information will be issued after the holiday voucher scheme for the October Half term has been completed.

The voucher scheme for these holiday periods will have a value of £20 per pupil per week. Those parents / guardians who received a voucher during the summer holiday period will automatically be sent an e-mail that will ask if they wish to receive a voucher for their eligible children by clicking a hyperlink. This will generate a further e-mail which will contain the links to the voucher portal where they can select the supermarket in the same way as happened previously. Parents/ Guardians will not need to reapply.

Please do not make an additional application if you received a voucher during the Summer holiday period, **Unless you are a Parent/Guardian of a child who is 17 years of age or older and attending a B&NES sixth form**, when you will need to make a fresh application.

Parents and Guardians should receive an e-mail approximately 12:00 on Friday 22nd October. If you have not received this e-mail by the end of that day, please check in your Spam folder before contacting the Benefits team on 01225 477777.

The Voucher value will be for £20 per child per week.

For parents / guardians who are eligible for free school meals but did not claim a voucher previously, you can make a claim through the council's web portal which will open approximately 12:00 on Friday 22nd October.

The web link below will request you to submit an e-mail address and some details about yourself and your child /children including your National Insurance number. From this information we will cross check with the entitled to benefit related free school meals register and issue a voucher link back to your e-mail address. This may take a few days to complete.

Web Link <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-latest-information-and-advice/help-parents-and-carers>

Once you have the electronic link you will be able to claim a voucher from a range of supermarkets including Tesco, Sainsburys and Morrisons. Please ensure you are happy with your choice of

supermarket **before** you click on the relevant store option, as this **cannot be changed** once it has been picked. **It is also very important that upon receiving your voucher for your chosen supermarket that you download and save it to your smartphone or computer, as replacements will not be issued.** The voucher may be used in-store or on-line for some supermarkets and can also be printed off before taking it to the supermarket. The voucher must be redeemed in full in one transaction and change will not be given.

If you do not have electronic means of contacting us, then please phone the Benefits team on 01225 477777. where you will be asked to provide the same data and a voucher will be made available to you via alternative means depending on your circumstances.

Yours sincerely
Bath and North East Somerset Council