

My ref: CHVS – Summer 2026  
Your ref: Holiday Voucher Scheme  
Date: 7 July 2026  
Contact: Holiday Voucher Scheme  
Telephone:  
E Mail: [holidayvoucherscheme@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:holidayvoucherscheme@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

**Children, Education & Families**  
Executive Director: Martin Purbrick

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

**Education Directorate**  
New Shire Hall  
Emery Crescent  
Alconbury Weald  
Huntingdon  
PE28 4YE

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to let you know that the Summer Holiday Voucher Scheme will be the final holiday vouchers that you receive for your children.

The Government's Household Support Fund, which paid for the Holiday Voucher Scheme, ended on 31 March 2026. A new Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) has now replaced it which continues to support families but with more of a focus on longer term support.

Although the voucher scheme is ending, support is still available for families who need it. The new fund will continue to help households experiencing financial hardship, and families who have previously received holiday vouchers will be prioritised for support where appropriate. We also encourage eligible families to access the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme: [Cambridgeshire Holiday Activities and Food Programme](#), which offers free fun holiday activities and a healthy meal and snacks during school holidays.

Families can access further support on our website: [Support with the cost of living](#). This page provides information and support on housing, food, financial and budgeting support, as well as crisis support. As we continue to develop our response to the CRF, there will be continued updates to this page providing details of any new services and offers of support.

Please see the **FAQs for Parents** included with this letter. They explain:

- who is eligible for the final voucher
- when and how vouchers will be sent
- how to use your voucher
- where to find other financial and food support available locally

For the Summer Holiday, a **£60 supermarket voucher** will be sent to all eligible children and young people by **email and/or text on Saturday 18 July**. They may arrive any time up to **9.00pm** that day. If you have not received your voucher by **Sunday 19 July**, please [contact us](#), including your child's name and school in your message.

Children who become eligible for income-related Free School Meals by **31 August** will also receive a voucher once their eligibility has been confirmed.



If you think your child may qualify for income-related Free School Meals but you have not yet applied, we encourage you to do so: [Free School Meals](#). A successful application can also provide additional funding for your child's school.

All vouchers must be claimed by **midday on Friday 11 September**. We are **unable to reinstate unclaimed vouchers** after this date.

We hope the scheme has helped to support your family. We also hope that this final voucher provides some assistance during the summer holidays and that you continue to access any support available to you.

Yours sincerely,



Sarah Callaghan  
Service Director: Education

## 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 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 during the holiday period.

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

To be eligible for a free school meal, students must be enrolled in Further Education provision funded by the Department for Education, aged over 16 but under 19 on 31 August 2025 and be in receipt of, or have 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: academic year 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK](#)

### Other Eligibility

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

Students aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August 2025 and accessing the bursary scheme.

Students aged 19-25 who have an Education, Health and Care Plan and access the bursary scheme or free school meals at college.

### 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](http://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.

### Healthy Start Scheme

If you're more than 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under 4, the Healthy Start scheme can help you buy healthy foods and get free vitamins. Visit [Get help to buy food and milk \(Healthy Start\)](#) to find out if you are eligible and how to apply.

### 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>