

Dear Parent/Guardian

Free School Meals during Summer Holidays 2021

As you may be aware the Bath and North East Somerset Council provided funding to support benefit related free school meals during the Christmas, February Half Term, Easter holidays by issuing vouchers to parents. The Local Authority is looking to provide similar support during the summer holidays.

In previous holiday periods we have been able to support a voucher scheme with a value of £20 per pupil per week by topping up government grants, we are however unable to afford to top up the government grants for the summer holidays and therefore the voucher value will be £15 per pupil per week, in line with most other Local Authorities.

It is also anticipated following guidance received from the government that the funding for this type of voucher will stop after the summer holidays as the country moves out of the pandemic lockdowns and back to the normal processes. This means that it is likely that vouchers issued during this period will be the last unless new schemes are developed on a national basis.

For those parents / guardians who received a voucher at May half term they 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 May half Term.

For the summer holiday period we intend to issue the vouchers in 2 weekly tranches

Parents and Guardians should receive an e-mail approximately Thursday 22nd July. If you have not received this e-mail by the 24th July, please check in your Spam folder before contacting the Benefits team on 01225 477777.

Further e-mails will be sent approximately 5th August and 19th August. With the same procedures to access the vouchers.

The Voucher value will be for £15 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 22nd July**, at around 4pm.

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