

To parents/carers of pupils in  
Cambridgeshire / Peterborough Schools

**People & Communities**  
Education Directorate

Dear parent/carer

In November, the government announced funding for Local Authorities for the COVID Winter Grant Scheme. This grant is intended to provide a range of support to families over Christmas and February half term when schools will be closed and are not able to provide free school meals for those families who need additional support at this challenging time.

As a result, we are making two offers for families –

### **1. Direct Food Voucher Scheme**

A supermarket voucher will be made available to parents or young people who meet the criteria for;

- 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)
- 16-19 students in Sixth Forms eligible for Free School meals or for the 16+ bursary (young people aged 16 to 19).

A detailed list of criteria is attached to this letter (appendix 1) or alternatively, please ask your school / college if you need clarification on your eligibility. Further information on how to apply for free school meals can be found at [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals) if you have not previously claimed.

It is our intention to automatically issue each eligible child/young person with a £15 supermarket voucher for each week of the Christmas holidays. We will use information held by schools and the Local Authority to allocate the vouchers using a system called Wonde. They can be issued either by email or by text. Schools may be able to help you if you cannot access the vouchers by this route. Details of the supported supermarkets and how Wonde works can be found in the frequently asked question document sent with this letter. Please note that all vouchers issued in December will expire on **31 January 2021**.

If you **do not** wish to receive a food voucher please let your school know as soon as possible so that we can reallocate the voucher to someone else in need.

If you have not received your voucher by the 18<sup>th</sup> December and meet the criteria, please contact the COVID 19 Coordination Hub directly by emailing [communitycv@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:communitycv@cambridgeshire.gov.uk) or by phoning 0345 045 5219.

## 2. Accessing additional support for families

We understand that families who are eligible for the Direct Food Voucher Scheme may need further support. We also know there will be families who don't meet the above criteria but are in need of help. Therefore the network of coordination hubs run by the city and district councils will help you to access support, this may include:

- Access to Food
- Support with utilities e.g. help with bills or making your home more energy efficient
- Household items relating to warmth, hygiene, and cooking

If you need additional support with any of these, please complete the simple online form below –

[www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/wintersupport](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/wintersupport)

Once you have submitted the form, your local hub will be in touch to discuss what support is available and how it can best help. The hubs have been set up during this time to ensure that all residents of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have access to the support that is available. If you are unable to complete the online form, please contact your school who, with your permission, can make a referral on your behalf. Alternatively, you can call your local hub on 0345 045 5219 and they can complete the form with you.

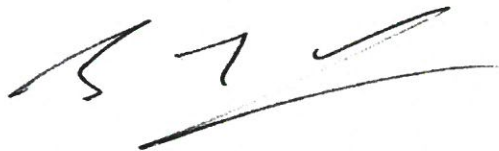
The welfare of our children and young people will always be our top priority. If you or your family needs support over the winter, please do not hesitate to reach out to us and we will do our best to help.

We wish you a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Simon Bywater  
Chairman of the Children and Young People  
Committee



Councillor Steve Criswell  
Chairman of the Communities & Partnership  
Committee

Cc

Cllr Steve Count, Leader of Cambridgeshire County Council  
Gillian Beasley, Chief Executive – Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council

## 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/](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals/) [www.peterborough.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals](http://www.peterborough.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals)

#### Eligible for 16+ bursary (young people aged 16 to 19)

- You're in, or have recently left, local authority care
- You get Income Support or Universal Credit because you're financially supporting yourself
- You get Disability Living Allowance (DLA) in your name and either Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit
- You get Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in your name and either ESA or Universal Credit

<https://www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund>

#### 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 Jobseekers 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 2020 to 2021 academic year - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)