

October 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

Important information regarding Household Support Fund discretionary grant

Suffolk County Council (SCC) is pleased to confirm that the Government announced a further six-month extension to the Household Support Fund from September 2024 to March 2025.

We can confirm that funds have been made available for SCC to extend the support previously provided to low-income families in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM) over the **October half term 2024**. There is currently no confirmation from the Government on whether the Household Support Fund will continue after this date.

The grant will be issued as a **£15** supermarket voucher for each eligible child from our provider **Pluxee** and is designed to help families with their essential living costs during the holiday.

As with previous issues of vouchers, the SCC Free School Meals (FSM) team will place the voucher order using the information provided by your child's school. Please ensure that your child's school holds the most up to date contact information for you, so that the voucher is sent to the correct recipient.

If the school has previously printed the vouchers on your behalf, then this arrangement will continue, or you can ask for the voucher to be sent via text message to your mobile phone number. **Please inform your school if you wish to receive the vouchers via text message, if you have previously been unable to receive them via email.**

We aim to have all vouchers sent to recipients by **Thursday 24 October 2024**. If you have **not received the vouchers by this date** or in the event of any queries regarding the vouchers, then please contact our team at freeschoolmeals@suffolk.gov.uk, rather than speaking to the school directly.

Please note, that if you have children who attend different Suffolk schools, you may receive your vouchers at separate times before the start of the school holiday.

Please look out for an email from noreponse@vouchers.sodexoengage.com, and please also check junk and spam folders before contacting us directly.

Please can we remind you that all vouchers will have a 2-month expiry date to be redeemed. Once redeemed, the expiry conditions of your chosen supermarket will apply, and you will have a minimum of 12 months to use the voucher. We urge you to contact our team as soon as possible if you encounter any issues redeeming your voucher as we will not be able to access the funding once it has closed and vouchers have expired.

We hope that this discretionary grant goes some way to help in supporting your family during the school holiday, whether buying food or freeing up some income to go towards energy and water bills or other essential living costs.

If you are financial struggling and require additional support, further information can be found at: www.suffolk.gov.uk/community-and-safety/communities/healthier/cost-of-living-support/.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lucy Nicholas', written in a cursive style.

Lucy Nicholas (she/her)

Resource Manager (Admissions and School Travel)

Education, Skills and Learning

Directorate of Children and Young People

Suffolk County Council