My ref: Parent Letter – FSM WSG Easter PCC
Date: 16th March 2021
Contact: Please contact your school for more information

PETERBOROUGH CITY COUNCIL

People & Communities
Education Directorate

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

Dear Parent / Carer,

Winter Support Grant (Easter) and Free School Meals

Direct Food Voucher Scheme

In November, the government announced funding for Local Authorities for the COVID Winter Grant Scheme. This grant was intended to cover a range of support to families over the Christmas and February half term school holidays. On the 5th March, the government announced further funding to support families until the end of the Easter holidays. The new allocation is at a lower level than the original grant, so we have decided to prioritise support to financially vulnerable families through continuing with our Direct Food Voucher Scheme.

A supermarket voucher will be allocated to parents/carers whose child meets the following criteria -

- Funded Childcare and Education for 2-year-olds under the income based criteria (children aged 2)
- Children eligible for the Early Years Pupil Premium under the income-based criteria (children aged 3 and 4)
- Children eligible for free school meals (children and young people aged 4 to 16)
- Students aged 16–19 in Sixth Forms eligible for free school meals or for the 16+ bursary (young people aged 16 to 19).

If your child normally 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 Easter Holidays.

A detailed list of criteria and information on how to apply for income-related free school meals are attached to this letter. If you have any further queries in relation to free school meal entitlement please contact our Education Welfare Benefits Team on ewb.fsm@cambridgeshire.gov.uk or telephone them on 01223 703200.

We will issue each eligible child/young person with a £30 supermarket voucher on the 26th March for the Easter holidays (£15 a week). The vouchers do not need to be used in a single shopping trip and once claimed will last for at least a year.

We will use information held by schools, settings and the Local Authority to allocate the vouchers through a system called Wonde. Vouchers will be sent by email and text to the nominated parent. If your child is eligible on or before the 18 March, they will automatically receive a voucher to cover the Easter holiday period. If we are notified of any new eligible claimants in the period up to 26th March, they will also receive a voucher. Due to the grant terms and conditions, we are unable to allocate vouchers to new applicants after this time.

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** unclaimed Easter vouchers will be

withdrawn on the **30th April**. Please ensure you select a supermarket before this date in order to retain your vouchers.

If you **do not** wish to receive a food voucher please let your school or setting 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 29th March** or have any queries about this scheme, please contact winter.support@cambridgeshire.gov.uk . Please include in any correspondence: the name of your child; their date of birth; and which education establishment they attend. This will avoid a delay in responding to your query.

Holiday Activities and Food Programme

Peterborough City Council are working with local schools, voluntary and community organisations, and childcare providers this Easter to offer the new Holiday Activities and Food Programme, thanks to Department for Education funding.

This programme is open to school age children 5–16, who receive income-based free school meals and is in addition to the Winter Grant Voucher Scheme.

Further details on the programme can be found here - https://www.peterborough.gov.uk/news/holiday-activities-and-food-programme-easter-applications-now-open

Wider Support

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 do not meet the above criteria but are in need of help. Further support is available from a network of hubs run by the city and district councils. Details of support in your local area can be found below:

www.peterborough.gov.uk/wintersupport

If you are unable to access the information online, you can call your local hub on 0345 045 5219. The team is available Monday – Friday 9am-5pm.

Yours sincerely,





Councillor Lynne Ayres
Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education, Skills and the University

Councillor Irene Walsh
Cabinet Member for Communities

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 / 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)

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 to apply online;

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker'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

Also schools are continuing to provide support for eligible families, in the form of either food parcels or vouchers, during this period where pupils are unable to attend school. Your school will be able to confirm the support that they are offering. The form is simple to complete and you will receive an immediate response.