

Dear Parent/Guardian

Free School Meal Vouchers during the Christmas holiday

As you may be aware, over the last 4 years Bath and North East Somerset Council has provided funding during school holiday periods to support households with children who receive benefit related free school meals, by issuing vouchers to parents. The Local Authority is looking to provide similar support during the Christmas holiday.

Each voucher will have a value of £30 per child. The Household Support Fund that B&NES receives from the Government, is the funding source for these vouchers, and has restrictions on how the money must be spent. Households who are in emergency need may be able to access other support with food across the area, including the council's Welfare Support Team <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/apply-welfare-support> and the Community Wellbeing Hub <https://communitywellbeinghub.co.uk/>

The Christmas holiday voucher system will be the same as previously used for the October half term.

Please note:

Since the October half term we have worked with both the Free School Meals Team and Early Years Team, to ensure children/young adults that are no longer in receipt of Benefit Related Free School Meals, 2 year funding or Early Years Pupil Premium are removed from the automated drop.

Parents/guardians affected by this data matching exercise will receive an email regarding this.

Eligible parents/guardians who received a voucher during the October half term

Parents/guardians who received a voucher during the October half term will automatically be sent an e-mail that will ask if you wish to receive a voucher for your eligible children for the Christmas holiday by clicking a hyperlink. This will generate a further e-mail which contains the select codes with links to the council's supplier, Hawk Incentives. This will then take you to a landing page where you will be presented with a selection of supermarkets to choose from, and a reward total which may be split by different supermarkets. Select codes may be added for each qualifying child to increase the reward total, and these will be issued to the value of £30 per child for the Christmas holiday.

Parents/Guardians will not need to reapply unless they have received an email following our data-match exercise noted above.

Parents and Guardians should receive an e-mail during the afternoon of Wednesday 18th December 2024. If you have not received the automated e-mail by the end of that day, please check in your Spam and/or Trash folder before contacting the Benefits team on 01225 477277 (option 1).

For parents/guardians who are eligible for Benefit Related Free School Meals but have not claimed a voucher previously

For parents/guardians who are eligible for Benefit Related Free School Meals but have not claimed a voucher previously, you can make a claim through the council's web portal which will open during the afternoon of Wednesday 18th December 2024.

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 benefit related free school meals register and issue a code back to your e-mail address where applicable. This may take a few days to complete.

Web Link:

<https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meal-supermarket-vouchers>

Once you have applied for vouchers, eligible households will receive Select codes with links to the council's supplier, Hawk Incentives. This will take you to a landing page where you will be presented with a selection of supermarkets to choose from, and a reward total which may be split by different supermarkets. Select codes may be added for each qualifying child to increase the reward total, and these will be issued to the value of £30 per child for the Christmas holiday.

Once you have selected your chosen supermarket you may checkout via your shopping basket, and after having entered your name and email address, vouchers will be dispatched to your email address within 24-72 hours.

For all parents and guardians

Please ensure you are happy with your choice of supermarket **before** you checkout, 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.** Full terms and conditions are displayed on the voucher.

The select codes will only be valid for 2 months once issued, however once a chosen supermarket is selected the normal terms and conditions of that store apply, which range from 12 months to two years.

If you do not have electronic means of contacting us, then please phone the Benefits team on 01225 477277 (option 1) 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

