

CHILDREN & LEARNING

Southampton City Council
Civic Centre
Southampton
SO14 7LY



Our ref: HSF7a

Date: 14th May 2025

Dear Parents/Guardians

Household Support Fund – Free School Meal Vouchers

We are writing to update you regarding the food vouchers currently being offered under the Household Support Fund for eligible children/families. As you will know, we have been funded for the past 5 years through the governments 'Household Support Fund', and we have actively chosen to continue to fund food vouchers through our delegated decision making as we recognise the financially challenging times families are having to deal with.

Whilst the programme does not specify how the local authority should spend their allocation, as an authority we have unilaterally agreed that we would wish to continue this way of supporting children and young people and their families, via the food voucher method.

In early 2025, we had confirmation of a 12 month extension until 31st March 2026 for the Household Support Funding. Further guidance from the Department of Work and Pensions was recently published as well as the allocation of funding for the forthcoming financial year. Whilst there is little change in terms of policy, we have seen a significant reduction in our allocation, meaning we have had to review current spending in line with these changes.

Because of our ongoing commitment to support children and families, we wish to continue the support through the existing voucher process, but this means we will be unable to provide the same level of support in terms of the amount for each voucher. We ensured that all eligible families received the same level of funding for the Easter holidays, but moving forward, vouchers for forthcoming holidays will be at a reduced amount of £10 per week, per child. With the summer holiday allocation being set at £40 per child. Please see a breakdown of the following allocations with the previous comparison.

School Holiday	2024/25	2025/2026
Easter	£30	£30
May Half-Term	£15	£10
Summer	£60	£40
October Half- Term	£15	£10
Christmas	£30	£20
February Half- Term	£15	£10
Total provided for each eligible pupil	£165	£120

Currently we are unable to confirm whether funding will continue after March 2026. We wanted you to know the current situation as soon as possible as we appreciate this support has a significant impact on our families.

So, as of May half term, each voucher will have a reduced amount per child, but there will be no



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change to the eligibility or process. We appreciate this will impact many families, but with the reduction in grant and our continued commitment to supporting children and their families, this remains the best way in which we can fulfil both. Going forward we will continue to update you with any changes to this position.

As part of the wider scheme, there are other ways in which support is available for residents. If you require any further information, please visit our Household Support Fund webpage: www.southampton.gov.uk/benefits-welfare/money-advice/household-support-fund/

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rob Henderson', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Robert Henderson
Executive Director for Children and Learning
Southampton City Council

cc. School Headteachers