



Message for parents and families from Gloucestershire County Council

Free School Meal Vouchers issued for school holiday periods is changing.

Free School Meal vouchers provided during school holidays which have been funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) through the Household Support Fund are coming to an end. This is because the Household Support Fund is ending, and Free School Meal Vouchers for the spring school holidays will be the last vouchers available under this scheme. A different fund, the Crisis and Resilience Fund is starting from Wednesday 1 April 2026.

We know food vouchers during school holidays have been important for many families and that's why we're working hard to ensure those who need support the most can still access it through the new Crisis and Resilience Fund and other support that we are putting in place across Gloucestershire.

To find out more, please:

- Visit Gloucestershire's [Family Hubs website](#) to learn about the support available for families, including the Holiday Activities and Food Programme, which provides great activities and nutritious food for children and young people during the school holidays.
- Look out for information about the incoming **Crisis and Resilience Grant Funding**, which will offer support for children and young people who are eligible for Free School Meals. Details on what you can expect and how to apply will be shared soon on the Family Hubs website.

Spring holiday 2026

This Spring holiday, Gloucestershire County Council will provide families in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM), who sign up to this offer, with vouchers to assist with food costs during the school holidays. The vouchers are funded through grant funding we have received, and they are separate to that of term time free school meals.

Applications for holiday FSM vouchers for the spring holiday 2026 will be open from Tuesday 3 March until Friday 13 March. Voucher emails will be sent from week commencing Monday 23 March. We hope that you will be able to pass these messages on to families within your schools.

Please encourage families to check their junk/spam folders during this period as sometimes the vouchers end up there.

If parents have not received their vouchers by Monday 30 March, please encourage them to submit a query by contacting childrensfund@gloucestershire.gov.uk

The scheme is for children in reception to year 11 who receive Pupil Premium (benefits-related) free school meals and attend a school in Gloucestershire. **We are unable to consider college and sixth form students, nor children who receive infant free school meals (available to all children from reception to year 2) - they are not eligible for this scheme.**

Families who have signed up to the scheme or who are already registered will receive a total of **£15 per child for one week.**

To find out more about the scheme, eligibility and to apply, please visit our holiday free school meal voucher webpage here: [Holiday free school meal vouchers | Gloucestershire County Council](#)

Families who have signed up previously do not need to re-register for the spring holiday vouchers - they will already have been included. Families that have previously signed up will need to contact us with any changes to their circumstances (e.g. if the number of children eligible increases or decreases). To ensure we reach all those who are eligible, we are encouraging parents and carers who have not previously signed up, to sign up as soon as they can.

Please note we check eligibility for the scheme by cross-referencing with the term-time free school meal register, so please make sure parents and carers are registered beforehand. They can register by visiting the [apply for free school meals](#) page. If your school does not currently use this method, we will require confirmation from the relevant school for the child's eligibility for Free School Meals. You can find more information on what schools these are on the link above.

Using vouchers – vouchers will only be awarded once the parent/carer has registered for the scheme and cannot be backdated. Vouchers should be used in the holiday period in which they are awarded. If vouchers are not claimed and have expired, they cannot be re-issued. Vouchers that were expected but were not received should be queried by contacting childrensfund@gloucestershire.gov.uk

For any parents/carers wishing to update details of an existing application, please ask them to submit an update existing details request by contacting childrensfund@gloucestershire.gov.uk so we can update their account, as details are not automatically updated.