Herefordshire Council

Dear parent/carer

Re: End of school holiday Free School Meal food vouchers scheme

We are writing to let you know the Government has made changes to how some financial support is provided to families. This means after the May half term, we will no longer be able to provide food vouchers during school holidays for families with children who receive benefits related free school meals.

There are now other support schemes available for families who are experiencing financial difficulties. Please read through the details below and get in touch with us for more information and if you need help through these new schemes.

What is changing?
Free school meal vouchers were previously funded through the Government's Household Support Fund (HSF) scheme, which formally ended on 31 March 2026. **This change means that the Council will no longer be able to provide school holiday free school meal vouchers after the May 2026 school holidays. Free school meal vouchers will not be available for the 2026 summer holidays, and for all holidays onwards**.

From 1 April 2026 the HRF was replaced by the Government's new Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF). This new scheme provides support for the families who are experiencing a financial crisis and cannot meet essential, immediate costs. Information on the support available to families through the CRF scheme can be viewed on our Council website www.herefordshire.gov.uk/community/help-with-the-cost-of-living/crisis-and-resilience-fund/

More information
If you are unable to find the information you require on the CRF webpage, please email the Talk Community team via crisisresiliencefund@herefordshire.gov.uk

Support available for families
If you have been impacted by the rise in the cost of living and are experiencing financial hardship, Talk Community's Money on Your Mind website provides lots of advice and guidance and includes links to organisations that may be able to help you. Visit the website at www.talkcommunity.co.uk/money-on-your-mind/

Here for Herefordshire Holidays (HAF) Programme
The Department for Education funded 'Here for Herefordshire Holidays' (HAF) programme will continue to run during the Summer, Christmas and Easter school holidays. Parents of children (from reception to year 11) who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals can book a wide variety of free activities sessions online in the run up to the school holidays by visiting the Talk Community Directory webpage www.talkcommunitydirectory.org/holidayactivities
Every child that attends a session will be offered a free healthy meal.

Kind regards,

Talk Community Team
Herefordshire Council