



Press Release from Buckinghamshire Council

29 March 2021

Helping Hand service continues to support families in Buckinghamshire during the Easter break

Buckinghamshire Council is running three exciting schemes over the Easter holidays to help families with children and young people eligible for free school meals.

First is the Helping Hand winter food voucher scheme - funded by the Government's COVID-19 Winter Grant Scheme, we are providing a £40 digital food voucher to help families struggling with household finances. The vouchers can be used at Asda, Morrisons, Tesco, Sainsbury's, Waitrose, Marks and Spencer Food or Aldi.

As part of encouraging physical and enriching activities during school holidays, families with children in primary school who are eligible for free school meals will also be provided with a £10 digital voucher that can be used at either Decathlon, The Entertainer, Argos, or a National Book Token that can be used at any book retailer.

Alongside the £10 activity voucher, the Council is also offering a limited number of holiday club places where children, aged 5-11 and eligible for free school meals, can enjoy craft and sports activities, including a nutritionally balanced meal to take away at the end of the session. Places are offered on a first come, first served basis, and are free of charge.

The council is sending a letter to relevant parents and carers, via schools, before the end of term, to give them the details of how to claim and activate the £40 digital food voucher and £10 activity voucher together with a special link for families eligible to book into the free holiday club places.

Simon James, Service Director for Education said: "We would like to say a huge thank you to all our schools who have been supporting families during the spring term. It's been a tough time during national lockdown, but they have now welcomed students back to school and are providing them not only with a superb education but the extra back up they need."

Claire Hawkes, Service Director for Localities and Strategic Partnerships said, "Our Helping Hand team continue to be available to direct people to the support that is right for them. This may be from the voluntary or community sector or direct from the council. If anyone is worried about food or warmth, and not sure what help is available, please contact our Helping Hand support line on 01296 531151 and someone will be there to help you. Alternatively visit our online directory <https://directory.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/> to see what support is available in your local area."