



29th November 2023

Dear Parents and Carers

Family Support Vouchers

Stockport Council are committed to ensuring residents have the help and support they need as part of our offer to families through the Department for Work and Pensions' Household Support Fund. As a part of this, the Council is supporting those families with school-age children who receive income-based free school meals and those in early years with equivalent eligibility, and those households in receipt of Local Council Tax Support and/or Housing Benefit paid by Stockport Council who have school-age dependents. Eligible families are receiving a Family Support Voucher to the value of £97.50 per eligible child to help with the cost of household utilities (energy, water and sewerage) and other household essentials including hygiene products, warm clothing and household equipment.

Families do not need to do anything to apply for their voucher/s, as these will be sent automatically for any eligible child (free school meal claim or Council Tax/ Housing Benefit claim in place on 22 November 2023).

Vouchers for children in receipt of free school meals will be sent by email where the council holds an email address for the qualifying family, otherwise the parent will receive a voucher by post. For families with children in receipt of free school meals for which the Council does not hold an email address, and for those children eligible for a voucher by means of Local Council Tax Support and/or Housing Benefit paid by Stockport Council, vouchers will be sent by post. This means that some families will receive both email and letter vouchers, and there may be more than one letter voucher if a family has more than one child eligible for a letter voucher.

Both vouchers can be redeemed for cash at a Post office, and both will include information on how this may be done and their intended purpose. A list of Post Offices can be found on the Post Office website: <https://www.postoffice.co.uk/branch-finder>.

The council are planning for letter and electronic vouchers to be sent in the week commencing 4 December 2024. The council will send an email directly to families who are to receive an electronic voucher to notify them once the vouchers have been issued.

The final date to redeem vouchers is 6 January 2024 Vouchers expire after this date.

If you are eligible for an electronic voucher, be sure to check your spam/junk folders as well as your main Inbox. The email will be sent from Stockport Council with the subject heading 'External: Post Office Payout® Household Support Grant'. Alternatively, search your emails for 'Stockport Council', 'Payout' or 'Household' to help locate it. Your voucher has been sent to this email address and is attached as a PDF barcode.

If you still cannot find your voucher, visit www.stockport.gov.uk/fsv for more information. The webpage also has suggestions and tips for finding, opening and redeeming your voucher and has a link to an enquiry form to use if you have any problems accessing or redeeming your voucher/s.

More information and the link to apply for Free School Meals can be found:
<https://www.stockport.gov.uk/start/free-school-meals-application-form>

Other support available:

Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme – Over the school winter holidays the HAF programme provides enjoyable activities and nutritious meals for primary and secondary school aged children. Places are prioritised to children that are in receipt of income based free school meals. To find out if your child is eligible, and for details of how to book a place when they become available, please visit www.stockport.gov.uk/HAF. For queries regarding the HAF programme, email the HAF Team on HAF@stockport.gov.uk.

Cost of Living Hub – help with food, fuel and money – Stockport Council have a dedicated cost of living webpage that gathers the wide range of support available from the council and other organisations in one place. Visit www.stockport.gov.uk/costofliving.

Cost of Living helpline – If you're struggling with the cost of living and need a helping hand to navigate all of the support available call 0161 474 2140. Our advisors can help you to access other support including the Stockport Council Support Funds Team and Food Banks. For more information about Support Funds visit www.stockport.gov.uk/financial-support-in-a-crisis.

Citizens Advice Stockport (CAS) – Citizens Advice Stockport provides free, confidential, independent and impartial advice and information. Contact CAS if you need help with your energy bills, rent or council tax, benefit checks or benefit applications, or mortgage arrears. You can also contact CAS if you need specialist support with benefits if you have a long-term illness or are disabled, if you're a carer or if you're a member of the Armed Forces community. Phone: 0808 278 7803 to speak to an advisor or visit www.cas.org for more information, advice, or ways to access services.

Healthy Start Vouchers - If you have a child under the age of four or are pregnant, you may also be eligible for further support through the NHS Healthy Start Scheme. More information can be found at www.healthystart.nhs.uk. You can also ask a midwife or health visitor for help or phone the Healthy Start helpline on 0345 607 6823.

DigiKnow Helpline – If you are struggling to get online, or do things online, or have lost access to the internet through lack of money, contact the DigiKnow Helpline on 07724 217888 or visit www.stockport.gov.uk/digiknow. Available support includes access to digital lending library, free data, access to free local digital skills classes and purchasing low-cost refurbished devices.

Warm Spaces – Over the winter, warm spaces, including libraries, will be open across Stockport providing a hot drink and a warm welcome. To find your nearest warm space visit <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/warmspaces>

Kind regards

E A Richardson

Mrs L Richardson
Co-Headteacher