

## School Meals Guidance

Following the COVID-19 guidance on [free school meals](#) sent out by the Government, Waltham Forest has produced the following guidance to support schools in the borough in meeting their obligation that every eligible child has access to food throughout the current COVID-19 pandemic.

To confirm, all schools are required to offer a childcare place to all children classed as vulnerable, those with ECH plans and children of key workers. However, every child who can be safely cared for at home should be, to limit the spread of the virus. Decisions as to whether children can be safely cared for at home should be discussed between the school and parent, and in some cases social workers. Where vulnerable children and children with ECH plans are not on schools' site, schools must ensure they meet their duties of care through the agreed safeguarding procedures (please see further guidance).

### 1. Provision of food:

Schools are encouraged to approach the issue of food provision in a way that is most appropriate to the children they are supporting, options include:

- **On site food provision** for vulnerable children and children of key workers;
- **Hot box takeaways** for children on FSM;
- **Food vouchers** for children on FSM;
- **Weekly hampers** for vulnerable children and children on FSM or specifically for those on FSM who are self-isolating or not attending the site.

**Please note:** For some pupils the weekly hamper delivery could be incorporated with the visits undertaken as part of the safeguarding processes schools have in place. Please see examples of best practice home visits from local schools.

### 2. Charges:

In these unprecedented times we encourage schools to consider to waiver charges for food to children of key workers.

Where additional expenditure is required of schools to enable them to meet the needs of families, schools are advised to maintain clear records to enable them to recoup these costs from the Government.

### 3. Offer from WF Catering for schools within the contract:

#### 3.1 Schools open to vulnerable children and the children of key workers

In all schools to whom Waltham Forest Catering Services provide meals it is proposed to continue to provide a school meal on site regardless of whether the children are eligible for benefits related Free School Meals (FSM) or not. Alongside this WF Catering can continue to offer a hot box 'take away' service if the school wishes.

We are however aware that take up by children entitled to FSM so far has not been at the level initially expected. We share the concerns that some schools have expressed regarding food waste and can therefore are offering a new 'hamper/food bag' alternative for schools to consider.

### 3.2 Hamper/food bag option

Waltham Forest Catering Services can provide a weekly/fortnightly food bag that can be available for pupils or guardians to collect from schools. This option can be available from week commencing 30 March and available to those pupils who are eligible for benefits related FSM.

The Hamper/food bag will contain enough food for five lunches for each child and will consist of the following food items:

- Loaf of brown or white bread
- Tin of tuna
- Tin of baked beans
- 6 eggs
- 1 litre fresh milk
- Pasta x500g
- Box of cheese triangles
- Cucumber and carton of cherry tomatoes
- 5 pieces of fruit (apple, pear, satsuma, banana)
- Fruit yogurts

Note: This food offer may be subject to change depending on seasonal and supply chain availability. The food offer will also be adjusted for an age appropriate secondary offer.

For this FSM service to operate effectively we suggest that schools need to consider the following;

- **School kitchens will need to be open on food delivery days** for catering staff to receipt and store correctly;
- **Collection points** – these will need to be considered by the school, the playground may be able to be used in good weather or the school hall, however entrance to the school will want to be minimised where possible;
- **Collection timings** – we recommend that schools offer pick up slots by year group from 10 - 2pm to minimise contact and queuing
- **No food will be eaten on the premises**
- **Monitoring of the FSM take up by family will need to be managed** – eg a tick list of those collecting
- **Where families may not be able to collect the food due to illness or self-isolation** the school will need to support families with the arrangement for friends or relatives to collect on their behalf
- **Communication this offer to their FSM families** – this is needed to encourage families to take up the offer and to clarify the details of the pick up, for example parents/guardians will need to bring their own bags to take the food home in

There are benefits and disbenefits to the hamper/food bag option. With a hamper there is only the need for one physical interaction a week and the school know exactly what is being provided to each child.

The Council is also exploring whether there may be drivers available to assist in the distribution of hampers to the most vulnerable families, although this cannot be confirmed at this stage.

If you want to explore the hamper option further please contact Christine Cornall, Catering Manager on 07730 766436. In any event Christine or an area manager will be contacting schools to discuss their needs moving forwards.

### 3.3 Schools with external catering providers

Schools not with WF Catering are strongly recommended to contact their catering provider to discuss what they may be able to offer your school. These discussions should ensure that there is an offer that meets the needs of children and families during this time.

### 4. Supermarket voucher scheme:

Government guidance allows schools to provide supermarket vouchers to families of children entitled to Free School Meal (FSM). Details of the national scheme that the government are developing with supermarkets and shops are yet to be confirmed however, below are details of local supermarkets that schools can contact directly to procure vouchers as required.

Government recommend that if providing families with supermarket vouchers schools should provide a minimum of £15 per week per eligible child.

Whilst using the standard supermarket vouchers schools should also be aware that there is no age restricted items for which the vouchers can be used. Therefore, consideration should be given to whether the child would be better supported via an offer of an on-site meal or food hamper as outlined above.

Local supermarkets with voucher schemes:

#### 4.1 [Sainsbury's](#)

**Tel:** 0800 636 262 option 3 then 2

**Type:** E-code or cards

**Payment:** BACS payment or cheques

**Booking process:** Order form - complete and email with payment details

**Order fulfilment process:** Processed once payment received

**Turnaround for delivery:** E-codes can be delivered within 24hrs - can be printed or emailed to parents. Cards can be delivered within 3 days of order.



Sainsburys Order  
Form 2019 .pdf

#### 4.2 [Tesco](#)

<https://www.tescoforbusiness.com/>

**Tel:** [08456 000 968](tel:08456000968)

#### 4.3 [Asda](#)

Asda For Business Team

**Tel:** 0333 207 9661

**Email:** [asdagiftcards@orionprint.com](mailto:asdagiftcards@orionprint.com)

**Type:** E-code or cards

**Payment:** BACS payment or bank transfer or CHAPS



**Booking process:** Set up account on [www.asdaforbusiness.co.uk](http://www.asdaforbusiness.co.uk) Once approved, orders can be placed.

**Order fulfilment process:** Invoiced once order received. once payment received voucher are issued

**Turnaround for delivery:** e-codes can be delivered within 24hrs - can be printed or emailed to parents. Cards can be delivered within 3 days of order.

**Restrictions:** the vouchers can't be used against third party products and concessions i.e lottery, stamps, tobacco, scratch cards, petrol etc. They can be used to purchase alcohol

#### **4.4 Morrisons**

**Contact:** Morrisons Gift Card Support [morrisongiftcardservice@bhnetwork.com](mailto:morrisongiftcardservice@bhnetwork.com)

**Type:** E-code or cards

**Booking process:** Set up account on <https://morrisons-biz.cashstar.com/> Once approved, orders can be placed.