



28th March 2023

Cost of Living Support

Dear Parents

As we approach the school holidays I thought it would be useful to resend this information to support those families in our school community who would appreciate this advice. If you are struggling with your finances, please get in touch to let us know as there may be things we can suggest which will help.

Contact your local citizen's Advice Bureau or Family Services

Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB)

You do not have to be a UK citizen to get support from your local CAB: you just need to be a resident of the local area. The CAB can help you with:

- Getting benefits or other financial support organised
- Accessing support for essential costs (food, bills, rent)

Visit the Citizen's Advice website at www.citizensadvice.org.uk or contact your local branch to book an appointment:

Feltham Citizen's Advice
2nd Floor, the Centre High Street,
Feltham
TW13 4GU
0808 278 7830

Brentford and Chiswick citizens Advice
Town Hall
Heathfield terrace
Chiswick
W4 4JN
0808 278 7830

Hounslow Family Services Directory

Hounslow's Family Service Directory in information and support for families with children and young people and will enable you to access the support you may need. You can access the website here: <https://fsd.hounslow.gov.uk/SynergyWeb/>

Check you are paying the right amount of tax

If you are working, then it is important to make sure you are on the right tax code. If you are not, you might be due a refund. Use the Money saving Expert's fee tax code calculator to find out – <https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/family/check-tax-code/>

Claim any benefits you are entitled to.

Use one of these benefits calculators to determine whether there are any benefits you could be claiming:

- [Turn2us](#)
- [Policy in Practice](#)
- [Support for migrant families](#) – use this calculator if you are a migrant family, or if you have no recourse to public funds (meaning you are not entitled to the majority of welfare benefits)

You may be able to get benefits paid early if you need cash urgently – this is known as a ‘short-term benefit advance’ – you will need to contact the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) universal credit line on 0800 328 5644

Check you have received all the government’s cost of living payments

The government’s [cost-of-living payments](#) are available for those receiving certain benefits or tax credits. You do not need to apply for these – if you are eligible, the money will go straight into your account.

If you think you are due a payment, but have not received one – report a missing payment to the government – <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/cost-of-living-payment#report-a-missing-cost-of-living-payment>

Be aware of scams!

If you receive any emails, texts or phone calls asking you to fill in an application form or asking for your bank details to receive a cost of living payment, **do not talk to them or send a reply.** Get more information on cost of living scams on the Money Saving Expert’s website here <https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/news/2022/07/dwp-cost-of-living-scam-texts-warning/>

Find out what help you can get with your energy bills

If you get benefits, you may be eligible to get £150 off your electricity bill or £150 added to your prepayment meter through the warm home discount scheme. You do not need to apply for the scheme payments are usually automatic but the best way to find out is to speak to your energy supplier.

In some circumstances, people who are unable to afford to top up their prepayment meters may be able to get a fuel voucher. You must be referred to the Fuel Bank Foundation in order to receive this voucher. If you are unable to top up your prepayment meter speak to somebody at the school and they will organise for you to be referred.

If you are in debt to your energy supplier, you might be able to get a grant to help pay it off. The below energy suppliers offer grants to eligible customers.

- The British Gas Energy Support Fund
- Scottish Power Hardship Fund
- Ovo Energy Fund
- E.ON Energy Fund
- E.ON Next Energy Fund
- EDF Energy Customer Support Fund
- BULB Energy Fund

- Octopus 'Octo Assist Fund'
- Shell Energy Support Fund

If your supplier is not listed, you can contact them directly to see if there is any support that they can offer. If you are unable to get a grant from your supplier then take a look at the British Gas Energy Trust website, they make grants available to any one – you do not have to be a British Gas customer.

Let us know if your child is entitled to free school meals (FSM)

If your child is eligible for free school meals (FSM) you need to get them registered. This will allow them to have a free meal at school and, as a school, we will receive additional funding (known as the pupil premium) to support learning.

If you claim one of the following benefits, then your child is eligible for free school meals (FSM):

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Universal Credit and have an annual income of no more than £7,400
- Child Tax Credit, but not entitled to a Working Tax Credit and have an annual income (as assessed by the Inland Revenue) of no more than £16,190
- Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit
- or are being supported by the National Asylum Support Service (NASS)

If you claim one of the above benefits and your child is not getting FSM then you can apply here - https://www.hounslow.gov.uk/info/20025/schools_and_colleges/61/free_school_meals

Get free or low-cost food

If you are worried about not having enough food to feed your family, you are not alone. There are a number of places across the borough offering support.

If you have a child under 4, and meet the eligibility criteria, you may be entitled to healthy start food vouchers. You can discover more about this here - www.healthystart.nhs.uk

There are a number of foodbanks across the borough and if you are running low on money or food then we are happy to make a referral for you, just speak to a member of staff who will organise this for you. You can also access free meals from a number of different services in Hounslow. Take a look at the following link to see where you can get free meals https://www.hounslow.gov.uk/info/20209/community_hub/2296/free_food

There are also food waste apps and websites like

- Olio (for free food and household items from your local community),
- Too Good To Go (for low cost food from local restaurants), or
- Low Price Foods (food that has passed its best before date, but is still safe to consume).

Replace or repair household items at a low cost or for free

Check if you can get broken household goods replaced or repaired in the local community

- Get free household goods on [Freecycle](https://www.freecycle.org/)

- Get help with DIY repairs at a [Repair Cafe](#)

Further information

- Contact StepChange, if you're struggling with debt
- Contact Shelter if you're having issues related to housing
- Contact End Furniture Poverty for help with furniture
- Contact the Salvation Army for emergency assistance
- See if you're eligible for grants from Turn2us
- Single parents can get support from Gingerbread
- Apply to 'The Family Fund' for grants if you are raising a disabled or seriously ill child and need support with essential items
- • Get referred to the BBC Children in Need Emergency Essentials Programme by a professional for items that meet a child's basic needs (speak to a member of staff if you feel you may need a referral and we will try to help)
- Get referred to Glasspool Charity Trust by a professional for grants for essential household items and clothing for individuals, couples and families (speak to a member of staff if you feel you may need a referral and we will try to help)

The London Borough of Hounslow

There is lots of information on the London Borough of Hounslow website with information about help and support which you may find useful at this time.

https://www.hounslow.gov.uk/homepage/241/support_while_the_cost_of_living_rises

As a school we are not able to give direct financial support and are not able to subsidise things such as school meals or trips, as we are also impacted by the financial challenges everyone is currently facing but I hope you find this information helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact these services if you feel you need to.

Yours sincerely

Christine Haslam
Headteacher