

Government announces school closures from Friday - 20 March 2020 update



31 March 2020 update

During the current closures, schools are being asked to make sure eligible pupils have continued access to free school meals where the pupil is not attending school. Eligible pupils are those eligible for benefits-related free school meals.

The Department for Education (DfE) announced a national voucher scheme to support schools with this process. It says that where schools aren't able to provide eligible pupils with meals or food parcels through their current food provider, they can provide eligible families with supermarket vouchers in term time weeks. Schools will receive an email from DfE's supplier Edenred regarding how to access and administer the voucher scheme locally.

If schools decide to use the scheme they will purchase and send an eCode directly to the parents or carers of eligible pupils. Parents will receive instructions on how to use this eCode to buy an eGift card from their choice of a number of supermarkets.

If parents don't have access to the internet, schools will arrange to print and post a gift card. Some schools who have established processes to deliver free school meals via local sandwich companies or their own caterers may continue to do this.

GOV.UK has more information on [COVID-19: free school meals guidance for schools](#).