Press Release from Buckinghamshire Council

29 February 2024

Free, fun and flavourful – support available for eligible families this Easter half term

This Easter, the popular Holidays Activities and Food (HAF) programme is returning with a variety of free fun-filled holiday activities and clubs for eligible children and young people in their local area. Booking opens tomorrow, Friday 1 March!

Funded by the Department for Education and coordinated by the council, thousands of places are available for children and young people (from Reception to Year 11) in receipt of benefits-related free school meals, to take part in the activities. A healthy hot meal is also provided at each activity.

Day trips, adventure activities, sports, dance and cookery are just some of the activities included within the Easter HAF programme, plus many more! There really is something for children of all ages and interests.

See details of all the activities and clubs on offer this Easter.

On Friday 1 March, parents and carers whose children are eligible for HAF places will receive an email or text message from HolidayActivities.com which will contain a HAF voucher. Those who are new or unfamiliar with the booking system are encouraged to read the guidance on how to book HAF places.

Buckinghamshire Council Cabinet Member for Education and Children’s Services, Anita Cranmer, said:

“Each year, the HAF programme is a great success in Buckinghamshire, and I am pleased that we have once again been able to provide such a great free resource for eligible children and young people.

“The advantage of this fun-filled programme exceeds the offering of a wide range of activities and a healthy meal; as it also encourages the development of valuable skills and provides an opportunity for young people to make new friends.

 “There are many fun activities running in Buckinghamshire during the Easter holidays and if the popularity of the clubs during the last few years has been any indication, I’d urge parents to use their HAF booking codes and book their children on as early as possible to avoid any disappointment. Each child or young person can attend up to four HAF sessions over the Easter period.”

In addition to the holiday activities, Buckinghamshire Council is providing eligible families with a £30 digital food voucher to use during the Easter holidays. Children and young people who receive free school meals are eligible for the voucher, as well as those receiving early years’ pupil premium or 2-year-old funded free education places. This scheme is funded from the Department for Work and Pensions’ Household Support Grant. The digital vouchers can be used in most major supermarkets in Buckinghamshire and are sent via the child’s school or Early Years setting ahead of the last week of term.

Arif Hussain, Buckinghamshire Council’s Cabinet Member for Communities, said:

“We know that the school holidays can incur extra financial pressures for families, so we are continuing to offer support to those who need it, including those not eligible for other forms of school holiday support.

“I urge anyone facing difficulties to get in touch with the council. We are there to help if you are struggling to afford necessities such as food, fuel and other household costs. For support, help and guidance visit buckinghamshire.gov.uk/cost-of-living, call 01296 531151 or complete the online contact us form and someone will contact you.”

For more support, advice or further activities and events for children this Easter, including a range of free and low-cost school holiday activities, visit Buckinghamshire Council’s School Easter Holidays support webpage.

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