

Press Release from Buckinghamshire Council

05 July 2023

Buckinghamshire Council offers free holiday activities, food and support for eligible children and their families this summer

Buckinghamshire Council is providing residents with a comprehensive range of support to help families during this year's school summer holidays. Eligible children and their families will receive Helping Hand digital food vouchers and some children will also have access to holiday clubs and hot meals provided by the [Holiday Activities and Food \(HAF\)](#) programme.

Funded by the Department for Education and coordinated by the council, thousands of free HAF holiday club places are available countywide in over 50 locations, catering for eligible children and young people in Reception to Year 11 and including specialist SEND HAF clubs. The HAF programme offers an exciting range of high-quality activities, including dance and football camps, movie making, martial arts, cookery and crafts, as well as a hot and nutritious meal at each session. The Roald Dahl Museum is also running fun outreach sessions at HAF clubs on three dates over the holidays.

Each eligible child or young person can attend up to 16 HAF sessions over the summer holidays.

A proportion of HAF programme places can also be accessed by other groups of children and young people who are identified as able to benefit from attending the HAF clubs. These groups include looked after and previously looked after children, young carers, children living in low-income households who are not in receipt of benefits-related free school meals, and children with an education, health and care plan. The council is working with schools and HAF club providers to identify and invite children from these additional groups to attend.

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

"We are once again proud to support our local children and families during the summer holidays, as part of our excellent HAF programme. These free and fun activities across Buckinghamshire have been a great success, enabling eligible children to enjoy fun holiday clubs and experiences with a healthy meal included. This year, the HAF programme is running in more locations, so it should be even easier for families to access HAF sessions near them.

"We know that the summer holidays can be a worrying time for families, as time off school can increase food bills and energy costs, as well as make it more difficult to arrange childcare for work, and other commitments. So, I'd urge eligible parents and

carers to book their children on to HAF sessions as early as possible so that they can benefit from the support that the HAF clubs offer families.”

Buckinghamshire Council’s Helping Hand service is also providing eligible families with a digital food voucher code to use during the summer holidays. Children and young people who receive free school meals, as well as those receiving early years’ pupil premium or 2-year-old funded free education places will receive a digital food voucher that can be used in most major supermarkets in Buckinghamshire. This scheme is funded from the Department for Work and Pensions’ Household Support Fund.

Buckinghamshire Council’s Cabinet Member for Communities, Arif Hussain, said: “As part of our Helping Hand service, we are also offering a range of support and practical advice for residents who might be struggling during the summer months with the general cost of living. The news continues to be challenging around high prices and mortgage rates and many local families are still feeling uncertain about their finances.

“I hope all families who are eligible use the digital food vouchers. Anyone who’s worried about covering costs can reach out to our Helping Hand team for help if they are struggling to afford necessities such as food and other household costs.”

-Ends-