The information below will answer some of the questions you may have about the changes that are happening to free school meal holiday supermarket vouchers from December 2026.

1. What is changing?

The council will stop providing free school meal (FSM) holiday supermarket vouchers after the December 2026 school holidays. After that point holiday vouchers will end for the rest of this financial year, with a further decision for the Easter 2027 school holidays onward to follow. More information will be provided nearer this time.

2. Why are FSM holiday supermarket vouchers being stopped?

FSM holiday supermarket vouchers are currently funded through a government grant. The grant has rules about how it can be spent. It does not enable the Council to continue providing FSM holiday supermarket vouchers indefinitely.

Instead, the council is expected to:

- Target support to people that are in financial hardship, with
- An assessment need for any crisis support provided.

Support for families in need will not stop. The Council will still help with food and essentials when families are in financial hardship. Instead of providing universal support with holiday supermarket vouchers, the Council will offer alternatives where appropriate or practical.

3. Is the council ending support for families who need help with food?

No. The council will continue to support families who are experiencing financial hardship, including help with food costs.

What is changing is how support is provided, not whether support is available.

Support will be provided through:

- **Cost of Living** information and guidance on our website

https://www.bristol.gov.uk/residents/people-and-communities/cost-of-living-support

- **Crisis payments** from the Crisis & Resilience Fund

https://www.bristol.gov.uk/residents/benefits-and-financial-help/crisis-payment-scheme/apply-for-a-crisis-payment

- **Holiday Activity and Food Programme (HAF)** information for school holidays

https://www.bristol.gov.uk/residents/people-and-communities/find-a-holiday-activity-in-your-area

4. What about children who have free school meals at school?

Schools will continue to provide free school meals in the usual way during term-time for pupils who are eligible for benefit related FSM.

The change is only to school **holiday supermarket vouchers.** Children who receive education in settings other than at school (EOTAS), will also continue to receive term-time support for food in the same way.

5. Where can I go for help?

If you are worried about money or experiencing hardship, you can seek and support via the link below.

https://www.bristol.gov.uk/residents/people-and-communities/cost-of-living-support