

8 February 2022

Dear Headteacher / Principal

### **Community Pantries – sustainable support with the cost of food for families this winter**

You will have received our school communications last week about the distribution of free school meal vouchers for February Half Term, which aim to help vulnerable families struggling with the cost of food.

We understand that families have found these vouchers useful, and some have relied on them through the holidays. However, it was always intended that vouchers would provide temporary support to families, and this may well be the last set of vouchers that will be distributed from the Department for Work and Pensions' Household Support Grant. Further funding is not expected.

Our focus now is to encourage families in need to use more sustainable sources of support on a regular basis, such as community pantries, to help them with the cost of food.

Whilst schools have a choice about which voucher provider they use, Hampshire County Council has been working with the organisation 'Wonde evouchers' to enable their £15 holiday meal evouchers to be used at community pantries in Hampshire. A list of all the community pantries able to accept evouchers from families is available on the connect4communities website:

[www.connect4communities.org/communitypantries-overview/communitypantries](http://www.connect4communities.org/communitypantries-overview/communitypantries)

**We are directly seeking your help in signposting families to their local community pantry where they can continue to find subsidised food once free meal voucher funding has ended.**

Families and individuals can continue to access community pantries by membership, where, for a small weekly contribution (usually around £5), they can receive food to a significantly higher value. These pantries offer a range of fresh, frozen and general foods and many provide wraparound support for vulnerable families – putting them in touch with services related to utility bills, health, employment and education.

**There is a community pantry within walking distance of your school, and we are asking you to:**

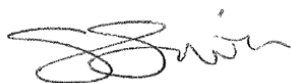
- a) **help families to understand where their local community pantry is located, the opening times and the benefits it can offer; and**
- b) **consider providing families with evouchers for February Half Term, so they can redeem their vouchers in the community pantry.**

At the end of this letter are full details of your local pantry, which you can use in your next communication to parents, such as newsletters or emails.



Thank you again for your co-operation in the delivery of this scheme for Hampshire's children.

Yours faithfully



**Suzanne Smith**  
**Assistant Director**  
**Access, Resources and Business Development**

<b>Community Pantry</b>	<b>Andover Community Pantry</b>
<b>Address</b>	Romsey Community Services The Longmeadow Centre, The Oval Andover, SP10 5DE
<b>Telephone</b>	01264 359223
<b>E-mail</b>	<a href="mailto:community@romsey.hants.sch.uk">community@romsey.hants.sch.uk</a>
<b>Opening Hours</b>	Monday, Tuesday & Friday 9.30am-12pm Wednesday 4pm-6pm
<b>Web site</b>	<a href="https://rcsservices.org.uk">Connect4Community Pantry - RCS (rcsservices.org.uk)</a> <a href="https://rcsservices.org.uk/our-services/connect4community-pantry/">https://rcsservices.org.uk/our-services/connect4community-pantry/</a>
<b>Facebook</b>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/RCS SERVICES">RCS Services   Facebook</a> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/RCS SERVICES">https://www.facebook.com/RCS SERVICES</a>

To find out what support and activities are available locally search the Hampshire Family Information and Services Hub (FISH): [Family Information and Services Hub \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://fish.hants.gov.uk):  
<https://fish.hants.gov.uk/kb5/hampshire/directory/home.page>

