

# St Matthias Church of England Primary School



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**Executive Principal:** Sian Davies • **Headteacher:** Lucy Blewett

Wednesday 3rd June 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

Yesterday you will have received a message from us stating that the Edenred Holiday Food Vouchers will be ending from September 2026. The vouchers are funded by the Government through our local authority, Hackney Council, and the decision to end the scheme has not been taken by the school. We have now received further guidance from Hackney regarding the reasoning and what support will be in place instead.

The Government has launched a new programme of support to residents on low incomes called the Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF). This fund replaces the Household Support Fund (HSF). As part of this change, the Government has set an expectation that councils move away from providing holiday food support to all families eligible for free school meals by the end of September. Instead, funding is intended to be used in more targeted ways, including financial support, debt and benefits advice, and services that help households manage the cost of living over the long term.

In Hackney, residents experiencing financial hardship can access crisis payments via the Council's [Here to Help](#) service, alongside wider support such as benefit advice, employment support, and help with the cost of living.

- Get help through Here to Help: <https://bit.ly/3PFVBFj>  
If you're unable to apply online, you can:
- Visit Hackney Service Centre – a member of staff will help you to complete the application if needed
- Call 020 8356 3111 (Monday to Friday, 9 am to 5 pm) – a member of staff will help you complete the application over the phone; translators are available if needed

Hackney Here to Help is a free service; you should not pay anyone to help you complete the form. Information about other services that support residents with the cost of living can be found at: <https://bit.ly/3PenLam>. To receive a printed booklet, please email [rachel.salmon@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:rachel.salmon@hackney.gov.uk) or call 0208 356 7732, leaving your name and address.

We understand that this may be a worrying or difficult change for many families. While this policy has been set by the Government, Hackney Council is responsible for deciding how support will be provided locally in future. Please note that these changes do not impact term-time free school meals. Hackney Council would like affected families to complete a short survey regarding the impact of the above changes, and you can do so by following this link: <https://bit.ly/holiday-food-support>

Your feedback will help Hackney:

- understand what has worked well and what has not
- identify any challenges families face in accessing food and other essentials
- shape the support we put in place in Hackney going forward

The survey will be open for responses until Sunday 5th July 2026.

Your response is important and will directly inform the recommendations Hackney makes about future support.

Hackney are also running focus groups regarding the announced changes:

These discussions are an opportunity to:

- Share your experience of holiday food support in more detail
- Talk about any challenges you face in accessing food or support
- Tell us what would make the biggest difference to you and your household
- Help shape how support is provided in Hackney in the future

Each session will last around **an hour** and will be run online using Google Meet or in person at venues across the borough. You do not need to prepare anything in advance and you are welcome to join whichever session works best for you. You do not have to give your name to the rest of the group, and you can keep your camera off if you wish.

Please book a slot by following the links next to your chosen session.

#### **Join an in-person session**

**Thursday 18th June, 10.30 - 11.30 am (Hackney Central).** Reserve a place by following the link at: <http://bit.ly/4undZ4Y>

**Saturday 27th June, 2.00 - 3.00 am (Dalston).** Reserve a place by following the link at: <https://bit.ly/4eTbmTI>

**Monday 29th June, 5.00 - 6.00 pm (Clapton).** Reserve a place by following the link at: <https://bit.ly/4tF6Go8>

#### **Join an online session**

**Monday, June 15th 12:00 – 1.00 pm.** Reserve a place by following the link at: <https://bit.ly/4dzYFuv>

**Saturday 20th June, 11:00 am – 12:00 pm.** Reserve a place by following the link at: <https://bit.ly/4ulKpg5>

**Wednesday 24th June, 5:00 – 5:45 pm** Reserve a place by following the link at: <https://bit.ly/4dMg0AOr>

Or email [rachel.salmon@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:rachel.salmon@hackney.gov.uk) or call 0208 356 7732 for more details.

#### **Why take part?**

These sessions will help us better understand how these changes affect people day-to-day and ensure that future support reflects the needs of families in Hackney. All participants in focus groups will receive a £20 Love to Shop Voucher in recognition of their time.

Yours sincerely



Lucy Blewett  
Headteacher