



3<sup>rd</sup> November 2022

Dear Parent/Carer

### **Cost of Living Support**

Find out what help and support is available to you and your family as the cost-of-living crisis continues to bite.

We know everyone is feeling the pinch this winter and we want to support those families in our school community who are impacted the most. If you're struggling with your finances, please do get in touch to let us know, as there may be things we can suggest which will help. We want to do everything we can to help you and your child through this difficult winter. Please find below some practical advice that may be of use.

**Contact your local Citizen's Advice Bureau or Children's Centre.**

#### **Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB)**

You don't have to be a UK citizen to get support from your local CAB, you just need to be a resident of the local area. The CAB can help you with:

- Getting benefits or other financial support organised
- Accessing support for essential costs (food, bills, rent)

Visit the Citizens Advice's website or contact your local branch to book an appointment at Thurrock Citizens Advice 2nd Floor Voluntary & Community Resource Centre High Street Grays Essex RM17 6XP

#### **Thurrock Children's Centres**

Contact your local Children's Centres to get help accessing all the support you might need as a family. Find your local Children's Centre at [www.thurrock.gov.uk](http://www.thurrock.gov.uk) › [childrens-centres](#)

#### **Check you're paying the right amount of tax**

Make sure you're on the right tax code. If you aren't you might be due a refund. Use the Money Saving Expert's free tax code calculator to find out.

#### **Claim any benefits you're entitled to**

Use 1 of these benefits calculators to determine whether there are any benefits you could be claiming:

- Turn2us
- Policy in Practice

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- **Support for migrant families** – use this calculator if you are a migrant family, or if you have no recourse to public funds

You may be able to get benefits paid early if you're already feeling the squeeze - this is known as 'a short-term benefit advance' - you will need to contact the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) office that's dealing with your claim.

### **Check you've received all the government's cost of living payments**

The government's cost of living payment is available for those receiving certain benefits or tax credits. You don't need to apply for these – if you're eligible the money should go straight into your account.

- If you think you're due a payment, but haven't received one – go to [GOV.UK: Cost of living support](#) – select 'Support with your bills'

### **Find out what help you can get with your energy bills**

- Take a look at these resources from [Simple Energy Advice](#), the [British Gas Energy Trust](#), the [Money Saving Expert](#) website and [GOV.UK: Help for households – energy bills](#)

Let us know if your child is entitled to free school meals (FSM)

If your child is eligible for free school meals (FSM) you need to get them registered. This will allow them to get a free meal at school, and we'll get extra funding to support your child's learning.

See what other support you can get from Thurrock Local Authority by visiting the link below which gives information and advice on various support with the cost of living.

[www.thurrock.gov.uk/support-with-cost-of-living/cost-of-living-support](http://www.thurrock.gov.uk/support-with-cost-of-living/cost-of-living-support)

### **Get free or low-cost food**

If you're worried about not having enough food to feed your family, you're not alone. There are a number of places offering support.

- Treetops Learning Community are registered to issue Foodbank Vouchers through Thurrock Foodbank who you can contact on [01375 416200](tel:01375 416200)
- If you have a child under 4, and meet the eligibility criteria, you may be entitled to [healthy start food vouchers](#)

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- Use food waste apps and websites like [Olio](#) (for free food and household items from your local community), [Too Good To Go](#) (for low cost food from local restaurants), or [Low Price Foods](#) (food that has passed its best before date, but is still safe to consume)

### Uniform Recycling Scheme

With immediate effect Treetops are setting up a recycling uniform scheme. In order for this to work, we request that parents kindly donate any uniform that is no longer required by your child. Providing it is clean and in good order, we will take it and store it and this will be made available to families that are unable to replace uniform due to financial constraints. Can you please send unwanted uniform to our Post 19 team who will get it ready for recycling.

### Further information

- Contact [StepChange](#), if you're struggling with debt
- Contact [Shelter](#) if you're having issues related to housing
- Get free household goods on [Freecycle](#)
- Contact the [Salvation Army](#) for emergency assistance
- See if you're eligible for [grants from Turn2us](#)
- Single parents can get support from [Gingerbread](#)

Please do not hesitate to get in contact if you have any concerns impacted by the cost of living crisis and we will endeavour to support where possible.

Yours sincerely

Mrs T Carroll

Designated Safeguarding Lead

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