

# Leicestershire Holiday Activities and Food Programme

## Guidance for 2023

### Background

Research has shown that the school holidays can be pressure points for some families. For some children this can lead to a holiday experience gap, with children from low-income households being:

- less likely to access organised out-of-school activities
- more likely to experience 'unhealthy holidays' in terms of nutrition and physical health
- more likely to experience social isolation

The DfE HAF programme is a response to this issue, with evidence showing that free holiday clubs can have a positive impact on children and young people, and that they work best when they:

- provide consistent and easily accessible enrichment activities
- cover more than just breakfast or lunch
- involve children (and parents) in food preparation
- use local partnerships and connections, particularly with the voluntary and community organisation sector

Following successful pilots, the HAF programme was rolled out to all upper tier local authorities in 2021 and funding extended to 2025. Leicestershire County Council has received funding from the DfE to co-ordinate the provision of the programme for Leicestershire.

### **Who the programme is for**

The HAF programme funding is primarily for school aged children from reception to year 11 (inclusive) who receive benefits-related free school meals (FSM). Benefits-related FSMs are available to pupils if their parents are in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits and have a claim verified by their school or local authority.

Local authorities are asked to ensure that the offer of free holiday club provision is available for all children in receipt of benefits-related free school meals in their area. Though this does not mean we expect all to attend, as the provision is voluntary.

### **Universal infant free school meals**

All children in reception, year 1 and year 2 in England's state-funded schools receive a free meal under the universal infant free school meals (UIFSM) policy.

Infant pupils who receive a free meal under UIFSM must also be eligible for benefits-related FSM to be able to access a place on the HAF programme.

## **Working with children with SEND or additional needs**

We want HAF provision to be inclusive and accessible to all benefits-related free school meals eligible children in Leicestershire. Therefore, a higher rate of funding is available to support the inclusion of children who may need extra support to engage with the programme, most typically, children with Special Education Needs and/or Disabilities who require extra adult help and/or specialist equipment.

There is also flexibility in how HAF programmes can be delivered to eligible children with SEND or additional needs e.g. offering extended or condensed sessions to meet needs.

## **Aims of the programme**

There are many benefits for children who attend the HAF programme. We want to encourage all HAF providers to ensure a high quality experience that will result in children:

- receiving healthy and nutritious meals
- maintaining a healthy level of physical activity
- being happy, having fun and meeting new friends
- developing a greater understanding of food, nutrition and other health-related issues
- taking part in fun and engaging activities that support their development
- feeling safe and secure
- getting access to the right support services
- returning to school feeling engaged and ready to learn

Families can also benefit, when HAF providers include their needs in planning and delivering their programme. This could be through:

- providing opportunities to get involved in cookery classes
- ensuring they are signposted towards other sources of information and support, such as health services or employment and education opportunities

## **The core offer**

Overall, local authorities are expected to offer the equivalent of 6 weeks' holiday provision to eligible children.

Over Easter:

- DfE expect that all participating children should benefit from at least 1 week of face-to-face provision, which should be for a minimum of 4 days

Over summer:

- DfE expect that all participating children should be offered at least 4 weeks of face-to-face provision, which cover a minimum of 16 days

Over Christmas:

- DfE expect that all participating children should benefit from a week of support which covers a minimum of 4 days
- as in 2021, DfE preference is at least 4 days of face-to-face provision, however where this is not possible, it should consist of at least 2 days of face-to-face provision complimented by at least 2 days of HAF support which can be provided in the form of high quality food hampers and activity packs

### **Length of HAF sessions**

DfE expectation is that in every HAF funded holiday week, all eligible children should be offered the equivalent of at least 4 hours a day, 4 days a week.

We know that many providers will want to provide a HAF programme that runs for more hours, days and weeks than the minimum expectation, and we encourage them to continue to do this. The paragraphs above set out minimum expectations, and we welcome provision offering more than the minimum, within the set funding.

### **Standards for HAF holiday provision**

The DfE have developed a framework of standards to provide a benchmark of what they expect from those delivering the holiday activities and food programme and expect **all** providers that are funded through the programme to meet this framework of standards.

One of the key roles of the local authority will be to:

- improve the quality of provision across the local area
- ensure that providers are supported to meet the high-level framework of standards

### **HAF Framework of Standards**

#### ○ **Provision for all**

DfE strongly encourage HAF provision is open to all children, not just to those who received a place funded by the HAF programme.

#### ○ **Food provision**

All providers must provide at least 1 meal a day (breakfast, lunch or an evening meal and all food provided at HAF clubs (including snacks) must meet school food standards

(<http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/actions/school-food-standards/>).

For some children, the opportunity to enjoy a hot meal at a HAF club is important and our aspiration is that providers should, where possible, try to offer hot meals to children attending HAF clubs. However, DfE acknowledge that this is not always possible and that alternatives to hot meals can sometimes be more suitable.

To ensure that all children receive a high quality and stigma free experience, if a provider is open to both HAF-funded and non-HAF-funded places, DfE encourage that all of the children attending are provided with an identical food offer and that HAF funded children are treated equally.

All food provided as part of the HAF programme must:

- comply with regulations on food preparation
- take into account allergies and dietary requirements (see the allergy guidance for schools (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-food-standards-resources-for-schools/allergy-guidance-for-schools> ))
- take into account any religious or cultural requirements for food

There is flexibility in the design of the food provision, which should always be tailored to ensure that all food meets the dietary needs of the children and families who attend. The food served should also be appropriate for the nature of the session, for example, offering cold packed lunches for parks or outdoor venues or for day trips may be more appropriate.

Providing food on site can provide an opportunity to engage children and families in food preparation and nutrition. When children are involved in designing menus and the preparation of food, they are more engaged and more willing to try new and healthier food.

There are also environmental factors to consider when planning the food provision consideration should be given to minimising food and packaging waste.

**Food providers:** Providers, where applicable, should be registered as a food business to give reassurance they are fully compliant with food hygiene laws and that food safety standards are being met. A food business is defined as anyone preparing, cooking, storing, handling, distributing, supplying or selling food. Further information is available on [food business registration](#).

**Natasha's Law:** From 1 October 2021, changes to the Food Information Regulations 2014 came into effect, adding new labelling requirements for food that is pre-packed for direct sale (PPDS). Providers should take the time to read the [guidance on the Food Standards Agency website](#) and ensure that all food provision for the HAF programme meets these requirements.

- **Enrichment activities**

All HAF-funded provision must provide fun and enriching activities that allow children to:

- develop new skills or knowledge
- consolidate existing skills and knowledge
- try out new experiences have fun and socialise

This could include but is not limited to:

- physical activities, for example, football, swimming, table tennis or cricket

- creative activities, for example, putting on a play, junk modelling or drumming workshops
- experiences, for example, a nature walk or visiting a city farm
- free play, for example, fun and freedom to relax and enjoy themselves

**Please note:** DfE expect all HAF providers to provide a balanced programme. For providers whose primary focus is set around a specific activity or sport, we expect them to ensure that children attending their provision benefit from a holistic and varied experience.

- **Physical activities**

Holiday clubs must provide activities that meet the physical activity guidelines

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/physical-activity-guidelines-uk-chief-medical-officers-report>) on a daily basis.

In line with those guidelines, we expect:

- all children and young people participating in the HAF programme should engage in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity for an average of at least 60 minutes per day
- children and young people participating in the HAF programme should engage in a variety of types and intensities of physical activity to develop movement skills, muscular fitness, and bone strength
- children and young people should aim to minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary, and when physically possible should break up long periods of not moving with at least light physical activity

**Please note:** Meeting the physical activity requirement does not have to be in the form of a structured activity session, but might include active travel, free play and sports

- **Increasing awareness of healthy eating, healthy lifestyles, and positive behaviours**

Providers are expected to incorporate helping children to understand more about the benefits of healthy eating and nutrition into their programme. These do not need to be formal learning activities. This could include:

- getting children involved in food preparation and cooking
- growing fruit and vegetables
- taste tests
- discussing food and healthy eating during mealtimes
- including food and nutrition in other activities

Offering positive learning and development through HAF activities creates stigma-free opportunities to support children and young people in learning about healthy lifestyles and exercise. This could cover, for example, the use of vapes, cigarettes, drugs, and how this can lead to issues including:

- economic
- social
- personal safety

- exploitation
- criminality

- **Signposting and referrals and supporting families**

HAF providers should be able to offer information, signposting or referrals to other services and support, that would benefit the children who attend their provision and their families. Other services and support could include:

- Citizens Advice
- school nurses, dentists, or other healthcare practitioners
- family support services or children's services
- housing support officers
- Jobcentre Plus
- organisations providing financial education
- early years and childcare, including help to pay for childcare (for example, Tax-Free Childcare (<https://www.gov.uk/tax-free-childcare> ) )

There are many ways that providers can meet this element of the programme, for example, through trained and knowledgeable staff engaging with families during drop-off and pick-up times.

We know that many HAF providers have worked to provide weekly training and advice sessions for parents, carers or other family members. We encourage providers who want to do so to continue to offer those sessions.

These sessions could provide advice on how to source, prepare and cook nutritious and low-cost food. This could be combined with the increasing awareness and understanding of healthy eating aspect of the programme, for example, by inviting children and their families to prepare and eat a meal together at a HAF session.

There are alternative ways of delivering this, for example, by providing participating children with ingredients and recipes to take away and try at home with their families.

- **Policies and procedures**

All organisations delivering the HAF programme **must** be able to demonstrate that they have in place relevant and appropriate policies and procedures, including for:

- safeguarding, including the recruitment of staff and volunteers
- health and safety
- relevant insurance policies
- accessibility and inclusiveness

## **Ensuring providers meet the HAF standards**

DfE expect local authorities to have in place a system to monitor the HAF providers they fund so

that they can be assured that they meet the expected standards for the programme and are providing a high quality and fun experience for children.

DfE also expect local authorities to ensure that robust due diligence checks are carried out on each provider they fund through the HAF programme.

It is expected that local authorities will carry out quality assurance visits to the providers they fund, in order to be satisfied that the provision is suitable, and that the provider has everything in place to deliver a high-quality programme.

DfE expect all providers who are funded through the HAF programme to meet the framework of standards and expect that quality assurance visits focus on ensuring that provision does meet the HAF programme standards, including checking on the following:

#### Food provision

- what plans the provider has in place to provide high quality and nutritious food
- how will they ensure that the food served will meet the school food standards
- if they have talked to children and families about the food they will serve
- if they have a robust system in place to ensure the food they serve takes into account dietary, religious or cultural requirements
- if they have a robust system in place to manage allergies
- if they are open to both HAF-funded and non-HAF-funded children, and how they ensure that all children get the same experience

#### Awareness and understanding of healthy eating

- if the provider will run specific sessions on healthy eating
- what activities or sessions the provider has planned that support children in making good decisions about food
- how they plan to incorporate the theme of healthy eating and healthy lifestyles into their HAF provision

#### Signposting and referrals

- how the provider engages with the families of the children who attend their provision
- what the provider has in place to guide and advise children and their families to ensure they are aware of and, where appropriate, referred to other services and agencies

#### Enriching activities

- what enrichment activities will be on offer
- why the provider has chosen them
- if the activities on offer are age appropriate

#### Accessibility and inclusiveness

- if the provider has a bespoke offer for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) that is clearly highlighted

- how the provider will ensure that the needs of children with SEND are identified
- how the provider will ensure that all staff are appropriately trained to deliver high quality, accessible and inclusive provision

#### Safeguarding

- if all staff have received safeguarding training
- if all staff been checked and vetted by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), where appropriate
- what policies the provider has in place to ensure safeguarding incidents are dealt with robustly and rapidly

#### Health and safety policies and procedures

- Check what health and safety procedures and policies the provider has in place

#### Insurance policies and procedures

- Check if the provider has up to date and appropriate insurance policies in place

### **Ofsted registration**

Holiday clubs may need to legally register with Ofsted depending on the provision they offer, they may also be eligible to register with Ofsted on the voluntary register or they may be exempt from registration (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/childminders-and-childcare-providers-register-with-ofsted/registration-exemptions> ) entirely.

Both clubs and providers that would require registration with Ofsted, and those that are exempt, can participate in the HAF programme.

To support the raising of quality and to better meet the safeguarding needs of children and young people, certain providers can choose to register with Ofsted

(<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/childminders-and-childcare-providers-register-with-ofsted/the-ofsted-registers> ) even if they do not have to.

One of the direct benefits to children and families of providers being Ofsted registered is that families may be eligible for tax free childcare or the childcare costs element of Universal Credit. Through this families may be able to claim back up to 85% of their childcare costs (<https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/universal-credit> ) if they are attending and paying for extra childcare at Ofsted registered settings.

DfE expect local authorities to check with all their HAF providers that they are appropriately registered, particularly those providers who may have amended their childcare offer during the holidays because of the HAF programme.

**Please note:** It is the responsibility of individual HAF providers to understand whether they are required by law to be Ofsted registered and to continue to review their status as and when the



provision they are offering changes.

## Available funding in Leicestershire

A standard per place/per session unit cost of £25 per place/per session inclusive of £6.00 per place/per session for food has been calculated to fund the cost of providing free HAF places for eligible children.

We want HAF provision to be inclusive and accessible to all benefits-related free school meals eligible children in Leicestershire. Therefore, a higher rate of funding is available to support the inclusion of children who may need extra support to engage with the programme, most typically, children with Special Education Needs and/or Disabilities who require extra adult help and/or specialist equipment.

An inclusion rate per place/per session unit cost of £50 per place/per session inclusive of £6.00 per place/per session for food has been calculated to fund the cost of providing free HAF places for eligible children with SEND/additional needs, requiring inclusion support.

Providers offering specialist HAF provision to meet complex SEND needs are able to apply for a bespoke unit cost, if required.

Unless you are offering specialist provision, inclusion rate places for school aged children in receipt of benefits related free school meals who also have SEND/additional needs and requiring additional staffing support or resources to engage in your provision should only be applied for only as required, based on actual bookings.

### **Please note:**

- Applicants are required to provide a detailed breakdown of how they will use HAF funding to deliver their programme in each holiday period.
- We expect your HAF delivery costs to be fully covered within the total HAF funding applied for.
- If you are offering paid/fee paying places alongside HAF, please ensure delivery costs are apportioned as HAF funding cannot be used to subsidise paid/fee paying places. For example, if 50% of your holiday club places are HAF places, then HAF funding should only be used to fund 50% of your delivery costs.
- Limited additional funding may be available for reasonable capital expenditure, for example a fridge to store food on site.