



Head Teacher: Mrs S. Hanson

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## **Information and Support for Families facing Hardship**

16.12.2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are very conscious that many families are facing hardship and uncertainty. We want to support our community in any way that we can, we know that financial hardship can impact on every member of the family.

I hope that every parent and carer in our school community already knows that you can talk to one of us if you are experiencing problems within your family. We aim to help where we can and if we can't help, we will do our best to signpost you to someone who can.

**Free School Meals:** If your financial circumstances have changed, you may be entitled to Free School Meals (FSM) and even if your child is already having a free lunch through the universal scheme (all children in Years R, 1 and 2), additional funds can be made available to support your child in school if you are entitled to FSM. Applications are made online via Worcester Children First [https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20062/schools/684/applying\\_for\\_free\\_school\\_meals](https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20062/schools/684/applying_for_free_school_meals) but you can also contact Tracey or Karen in the Free School meals team on 01905 845280 or by e-mail [FreeSchoolMeals@worchildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:FreeSchoolMeals@worchildrenfirst.org.uk).

As well as support available from us at school, the following agencies may also be able to help:

**Citizens Advice** (housing, benefits and debt advice; referrals to Foodbank and City Council's discretionary welfare support scheme) phone: 0808 278 7891 email: [advice@cabwhabac.org.uk](mailto:advice@cabwhabac.org.uk)

**Worcester City Council Discretionary Welfare Scheme** (food vouchers, gas and electric payment cards, white goods) call in at the City Council's Customer Service Centre, 82 The High Street, Worcester WR1 2EY or phone 01905 722589

**Worcester Community Trust** (support for families in crisis; referrals to Foodbank and City Council's discretionary welfare support scheme) phone: 01905 453453

**Council Tax Support** (claim support if in arrears with Council Tax payments) phone 0300 456 0560 email: [revenues@southworcestershirerevenue.gov.uk](mailto:revenues@southworcestershirerevenue.gov.uk)

The church team at **St. Barnabas church** can offer support, care, a listening ear and practical help and can be contacted via their website <https://www.stbarnabasworcester.org.uk/> or by phone to Rev Julieann Watson 01905 23785

**Your GP, Health Visitor or other health worker or social worker** can make referrals to the Foodbank and the City Council's discretionary welfare support scheme.



**Here2Help Worcestershire** has a range of different support options, from help if you need to self-isolate and don't have a local support network to business support. This can be found via their website on

<https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/here2help>

**Worcester City Council** made a **press release** last week to give further advice for families who are at risk of becoming homeless or facing hardship this winter. Please see below for this press release as this highlights other support available, some of which may be useful to you, a family member or even a friend or neighbour.

As a school we have seen kindness and care from so many different people during the pandemic. I wish you all a happy and peaceful Christmas and look forward to seeing you again in the New Year,

Yours sincerely,

*Sarah Hanson*

Mrs S Hanson

Headteacher



## Press Release: Worcester City Council

# Help at hand for Worcester families experiencing hardship this winter

A far-ranging package of support is available to support local families who are at risk of becoming homeless or are facing hardship this winter.

Financial and practical assistance is available to help low income families in Worcester pay for food, heating, clothing and other essential items. Help is also on offer for people who are struggling with debt or are at risk of becoming homeless.

"If you are struggling to pay for basic costs such as food and heating or are at risk of losing the roof over your head, then come and talk to us as soon as possible," says Cllr James Stanley, Chair of Worcester City Council's Communities Committee.



“The City Council has a range of financial and practical support it can offer depending on your individual circumstances. Please make contact now so we can help you to resolve issues and plan ahead for the future.”

You can contact the City Council on **01905 722233** or at [www.worcester.gov.uk](http://www.worcester.gov.uk).

### Financial help so families can access accommodation

The City Council’s **Spend to Save scheme** helps to remove financial barriers from people trying to access or sustain a tenancy. It can help to pay landlords a month’s deposit up front - or support Worcester residents facing rent arrears.

### Help to pay for essential items

The City Council runs a Discretionary Welfare Assistance Scheme which helps vulnerable low income Worcester households in crisis.

Following referrals from partner agencies, grants can pay for emergency food, energy bills, essential white goods such as washing machines, fridges and freezers, baby consumables, school uniforms and essential work items.

More details are available at [www.worcester.gov.uk/housing/benefit-advice/discretionary-welfare-assistance-scheme](http://www.worcester.gov.uk/housing/benefit-advice/discretionary-welfare-assistance-scheme).

### Tackling fuel poverty

Funding is available to help Worcester residents pay heating bills and to make their homes more energy-efficient through better insulation. Full details, including how over-60s can claim winter fuel payments and cold weather payments, are available at [www.worcester.gov.uk/housing/housing-grants/warmer-worcestershire-financial-support](http://www.worcester.gov.uk/housing/housing-grants/warmer-worcestershire-financial-support).

Worcester City Council is identifying around 60 properties occupied by families on low incomes. They will be offered free energy efficiency measures, saving them an average of £150 a year on their bills. The scheme is possible thanks to a successful application to central Government’s Green Homes Grant scheme.

### Helping families with food costs

The Government has agreed to provide food vouchers for children who receive free school meals over the Christmas holidays.



Worcester City Council has received a Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies from central Government.

Part of the funding will ensure soup kitchens in the city centre can provide at least 70 meals a day, six days a week for four months for homeless and vulnerable people. The City Council is also using the funding to support the Worcester Foodbank.

Local community groups including the Worcester Community Trust have also received funding to help local families with pre or primary school aged children to combat food poverty.

### Support from local charities

[Health and Hardship grants](#) of up to £3,000 are available to charities and volunteer organisations which support Worcester residents suffering from hardship or poor health this winter.

For further information please contact:

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