



St Michael and St Martin Catholic Primary School

Belgrave Road, Hounslow, Middlesex TW4 7AG

Headteacher : Mrs N Duggan
Deputy Headteacher : Mrs S Bell
Chair of Governors : Mr Paul Lemaire



Learning our faith, Living our faith, Loving our faith

November 2022

Dear Parents/Carers

We know everyone is feeling the pinch this winter. If you are struggling with your finances, please read this letter to find out what help and support is available to you and your family as the cost-of-living crisis continues to bite.

Contact your local Citizen's Advice Bureau or Family Services

Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB)

You do not 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 at www.citizensadvice.org.uk or contact your local branch to book an appointment:

Feltham Citizens Advice

2nd Floor, The Centre High Street,
Feltham
TW13 4GU
0808 278 7830

Brentford and Chiswick Citizens Advice

Town Hall
Healthfield Terrace, Chiswick
W4 4JN
0808 278 7830

Hounslow Family Services Directory

Hounslow's Family Service Directory is information and support for families with children and young people and will enable you to access the support you may need. You can access the website here <https://fsd.hounslow.gov.uk/SynergyWeb/>

Check you are paying the right amount of tax

If you are in work then it is important to make sure you are on the right tax code. If you are not you might be due a refund. Use the Money Saving Expert's free tax code calculator to find out: <https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/family/check-tax-code/>

Claim any benefits you are entitled to

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

Telephone number : 020 8572 9658 Fax : 020 8572 1982

e-mail : office@stmichaelrc.hounslow.sch.uk

www.stmichaelandstmartin.co.uk

Follow us on Twitter : STMM20



- Turn2us
- Policy in Practice
- 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 are 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) universal credit line on 0800 328 5644.

Check you have 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 do not need to apply for these – if you are eligible, the money should go straight into your account.

If you think you are due a payment, but have not received one – report a missing payment to the government:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/cost-of-living-payment>

Be aware of scams! If you receive any emails, texts or phone calls asking you to fill in an application form or asking for your bank details to receive a cost of living payment, **do not talk to them or send a reply**. Get more information on cost of living scams on the Money Saving Expert's website here:

<https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/news/2022/07/dwp-cost-of-living-scam-texts-warning/>

Find out what help you can get with your energy bills

If you get benefits, you may be eligible to get £150 off your electricity bill or £150 added to your pre-payment meter through the warm home discount scheme. You do not need to apply for the scheme payments are usually automatic but the best way to find out is to speak to your energy supplier.

In some circumstances, people who are unable to afford to top up their prepayment meters may be able to get a fuel voucher. You have must referred to the Fuel Bank Foundation in order to receive this voucher. If you are unable to top up your prepayment meter speak to somebody at the school and they will organise for you to be referred.

If you are in debt to your energy supplier, you might be able to get a grant to help pay it off. The below energy suppliers offer grants to eligible customers.

The British Gas Energy Support Fund

- Scottish Power Hardship Fund
- Ovo Energy Fund
- E.ON Energy Fund
- E.ON Next Energy Fund
- EDF Energy Customer Support Fund
- BULB Energy Fund



- Octopus 'Octo Assist Fund'
- Shell Energy Support Fund

If your supplier is not listed you can contact them directly to see if there is any support that they can offer. If you are unable to get a grant from your supplier then take a look at the British Gas Energy Trust website, they make grants available to any one – you do not have to be a British Gas customer.

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

If you claim one of the following benefits then your child is eligible for free school meals (FSM):

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Universal Credit and have an annual income of no more than £7,400
- Child Tax Credit, but not entitled to a Working Tax Credit and have an annual income (as assessed by the Inland Revenue) of no more than £16,190
- Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit
- or are being supported by the National Asylum Support Service (NASS)

If you claim one of the above benefits and your child is not getting FSM then you can apply here:

https://www.hounslow.gov.uk/info/20025/schools_and_colleges/61/free_school_meals

See what other support you can get from your local authority

The London Borough of Hounslow (LBH) has a number of things in place to support everyone through the current cost of living crisis.

From October 2022 until March 2023, warm spaces will be offered across the borough so that people who are struggling to heat their homes have somewhere warm to go. The warm spaces will initially be opened in all of the boroughs 11 libraries, you will be offered a hot drink and somewhere to relax; there is also free Wi-Fi available.

Parents/guardians can apply for help with school uniform costs on the LBH website. The school uniform grant is available to primary pupils from Reception to year 6 and secondary pupils in years 7 and 9. The grant amount for secondary pupils is £60 and for primary pupils is £15. You can apply for a school uniform grant here:

https://www.hounslow.gov.uk/info/20025/schools_and_colleges/1084/school_clothing_grants_-_secondary_and_primary/3

LBH currently has funding for the Household Support Grant. The Household Support Grant provides households with payments to help with essentials such as food and utilities. The funding is available from October 2022 to March 2023 and to qualify:



- you do not need to be in receipt of benefits. This grant is available to anyone who is on a low income
- you will need to provide proof of your utility bills showing that you are in arrears with your payments.
- If you are struggling to pay for food, you need to explain why you are unable to manage on the income you have.

You can apply for the Household Support Grant here:

https://www.hounslow.gov.uk/info/20004/community_and_living/2225/household_support_grant

LBH also offer Discretionary Local Crisis Payments (DLCP). The scheme is in place to: This scheme is in place to:

- Help households to establish themselves in the community following a stay in institutional or residential care
- Help households remain in the community instead of entering institutional or residential care
- Ease exceptional pressures and stress on households
- Avoid serious risk to health and safety where it may be prevented.

If you have any queries about the DLCP then you can call 0208 583 2000. You can submit an application here:

https://www.hounslow.gov.uk/info/20058/benefits/1493/discretionary_local_crisis_payments

There is further advice on the LBH website, such as:

- Tips on saving money and managing your budget
- Help with housing and homelessness support
- Help with energy costs
- Reducing food costs
- Help if you are in immediate financial difficulties
- Help finding work

You can view all of the information here:

https://www.hounslow.gov.uk/homepage/241/support_while_the_cost_of_living_rises

Get free or low-cost food

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

If you have a child under 4, and meet the eligibility criteria, you may be entitled to healthy start food vouchers. You can discover more about this here: www.healthystart.nhs.uk

We have a foodbank here in school, for more information on how to access it please email the office in confidence: office@stmichaelrc.hounslow.sch.uk . You can also access free meals from a number of different services in Hounslow. Take a look at the following link to see where you can get free meals:



https://www.hounslow.gov.uk/info/20209/community_hub/2296/free_food

There are also 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).

Further information

- Contact StepChange, if you're struggling with debt
- Contact Shelter if you're having issues related to housing
- Contact End Furniture Poverty for help with furniture
- 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
- Apply to 'The Family Fund' for grants if you are raising a disabled or seriously ill child and need support with essential items
- Get referred to the BBC Children in Need Emergency Essentials Programme by a professional for items that meet a child's basic needs (speak to a member of staff if you feel you may need a referral)
- Get referred to Glasspool Charity Trust by a professional for grants for essential household items and clothing for individuals, couples and families (speak to a member of staff if you feel you may need a referral)

With very best wishes



Mrs Duggan
Headteacher