

# Free school meals

## Voucher scheme parent/carer FAQs

For more information on how to use your free school meals voucher, please read the [user guide](#)

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## 1. What's the difference between an eCode and an eGift card?

**eCode** – this is a unique 16-digit number which will be sent to you by email or post from your school administrator. You will need to exchange this eCode for a supermarket eGift card of your choice from [www.freeschoolmeals.co.uk](http://www.freeschoolmeals.co.uk). You cannot use the eCode directly with the retailer, it must be exchanged for an eGift card first.

**NOTE:** Please check the redemption website link that was sent with your eCode. eCodes ordered through a different scheme need to be redeemed on a different site: please see your eCode email for more details.

**eGift card** – you can choose an eGift card from a selection of supermarkets; [see a full list here](#). To order an eGift card exchange your 16-digit eCode at [www.freeschoolmeals.co.uk](http://www.freeschoolmeals.co.uk). The eGift card will be sent to the email address entered during check-out and can be spent in-store at the chosen supermarket. Your school may select your eGift card for you and either print it and post it to you or arrange for you to collect it.

## 2. How do I use my eCode to select a supermarket eGift card?

You should order your supermarket eGift card at home before going to the store. To select your supermarket eGift card, follow the steps below:

1. Copy the eCode from your email or letter
2. Go to [www.freeschoolmeals.co.uk](http://www.freeschoolmeals.co.uk)
3. Enter the 16-digit eCode (you can enter more than one eCode if you have more than one to redeem)
4. Select a supermarket
5. Enter the amount and add to basket
6. Checkout and enter the email address you would like the eGift card sent to
7. Your eGift card will be processed and sent (please allow up to 24 hours for it to be delivered to your inbox)

See the [visual step-by-step user guide for further help](#).

## 3. I can't redeem my eCode?

Please follow the trouble-shooting steps below:

1. Please check the redemption website link that was sent with your eCode is [www.freeschoolmeals.co.uk](http://www.freeschoolmeals.co.uk). If your local authority used the Edenred platform to issue eCodes for the Covid Winter Grant scheme, the redemption website link will be different and your eCode will not work on this website. You may need to visit [www.selectyourcompliment.co.uk/grocery](http://www.selectyourcompliment.co.uk/grocery) instead
2. You may have entered the incorrect eCode. Please try to enter your eCode again. If your eCode is still not accepted, please delete the browsing history on your device, as your device may be storing the incorrect eCode in its memory
3. If you received the eCode directly from your school by post or letter:
  - a. All eCodes should be 16 digits long. If your eCode has a different number of digits, you can query this with your local school administrator and ask if the eCode is correct

- b. Your school administrator can also check the status of your eCode, including the eCode's 'Activation date'. eCodes will not work until on or after this date.
4. If you have followed all of the steps above and you still cannot redeem your eCode, please email [freeschoolmealsparentscarers@edenred.com](mailto:freeschoolmealsparentscarers@edenred.com) for more information.

#### 4. What supermarkets can I pick from?

The below supermarkets are available:

Supermarket	eGift card denominations available
Sainsbury's	Open value, £1 denominations
Tesco	Open value, £1 denominations
Asda	Fixed £5, £10, £15, £30, or £45 denominations
Morrisons	Fixed £5, £10, £15, £30, or £45 denominations
Waitrose	Open value, £1 denominations
M&S food	Fixed £15 denominations
McColl's (including RS McColl's and Martin's)	Fixed £5, £10 or £15 denomination
Aldi	Open value, £1 denominations
Iceland	Open value, £1 denominations
Company Shop Group	Fixed £15 denominations

#### 5. How do I know what the value of the eCode is?

This is stated in the email or letter sent to you by the school. If the value is missing, please contact your school administrator who will be able to look this up for you.

#### 6. Do I have to use the full value of the eCode when choosing my eGift card(s)?

Yes – your balance will be visible on the webpage and you have to redeem the full amount in one transaction.

#### 7. Can I choose to redeem my eCode at more than one supermarket?

You can mix and match different supermarkets within the same order, provided the total value you've chosen is equal to the value of the eCode you've entered. For example, with a £10 eCode, you could choose £5 for Tesco and £5 for Sainsbury's.

Simply enter the value you would like to order on each supermarket eGift card and your balance will update so you know how much you have left.

Please note that the full value of the eCode needs to be redeemed in one transaction, you cannot redeem a partial value of the code and save the rest for later.

Most supermarkets accept multiples of £1 per eGift card, however some other supermarkets have larger fixed amounts that can be ordered, e.g £10. [See Q4 for details](#).

#### 8. How long do I have to redeem the eCode?

You will have 1 month to redeem your eCode. The expiry date for a specific eCode will be included in the email. eGift cards have different expiry dates - please see [Q17](#).

## 9. What happens if my eCode has expired?

The eCode is cancelled and the money associated is then returned to the Department for Education.

## 10. My school has ordered an eCode for me, but it hasn't come through to my email?

If your school has sent you an eCode by email and it has not arrived, please also check the junk mail folder in your email account. The email will come from [noreply@edenred.com](mailto:noreply@edenred.com) and the eCode will contain 16 numbers.

If the email address that your school used to send the original eCode to you is correct, please carefully read the instructions and complete the form at the link below to ask us to send it to you again:

<https://cdn.edenred.uk.com/select/eCode-resend-request.html>

If the email address does not match the email address in our systems or you need to send the eCode to a different email address, we cannot resend this to you for security reasons. You will need to contact your school directly so they can cancel the eCode and send you a new one.

## 11. What can I purchase in-store with the eGift card?

Your free school meals voucher must be used for food and groceries, and must not be redeemed for any non-food items such as electronic goods, clothing or media, or any age-restricted items, such as alcohol, cigarettes or lottery tickets.

## 12. How do I know the value of the eGift card I have received?

The value will be present on the eGift card itself.

## 13. How do I use a supermarket eGift card?

A supermarket eGift card is a digital voucher. You will be sent an email which includes the eGift card with a barcode, or a link to see an eGift card with a barcode online. This can be presented at the till in-store either on a smartphone screen or printed on a piece of paper, just like a gift card. Most supermarkets can simply scan the barcode at checkout, but please check the table below for instructions for each supermarket. You do not have to spend the balance of the eGift card in one transaction, it can be spent in multiple transactions until the balance reaches £0.

Supermarket	Expiry
Sainsbury's	By scanning the barcode or entering your eGift card code number
Tesco	By scanning the barcode or entering your eGift card code number
Asda	By scanning the barcode or entering your eGift card code number
Morrisons	By scanning the barcode only
Waitrose	By scanning the barcode or entering your eGift card code number
M&S food	By scanning the barcode or entering your eGift card code number
McColl's (including RS McColl's and Martin's)	By scanning the barcode or entering your eGift card code

Supermarket	Expiry
Aldi	By scanning a printed version of your barcode or entering your eGift card code
Iceland	By entering your eGift card code
Company Shop Group	By scanning the barcode only

If you have issues scanning your barcode, please refer to [Q15](#). Some eGift cards can be used to purchase online. Please see [Q18](#).

## 14. Can I get a refund for my eGift card?

No, once an eGift card has been ordered it cannot be refunded or exchanged.

## 15. My eGift card barcode won't scan in store

You will need to download the images in the email containing the eGift card to make the barcode appear. Below are screenshots of the eGift card before and after images have been downloaded.

### a. Before images have been downloaded. The barcode will not show.

**Your Tesco digital gift card**

Right-click or tap and hold here to download pictures. To help protect your privacy, Outlook prevented automatic download of this picture from the Internet.

**Gift card value: £ 15.00**

Please keep your digital gift card number secure. Your card number is unique and the total value can only be redeemed once.

**Spending in store**

- You can spend your Tesco digital gift card at any UK Tesco store
- You cannot redeem your digital gift card in Tesco petrol stations
- To spend in store, simply print it out and present at the till with the barcode clearly visible
- For convenience, your digital gift card can be cut out and stored in your wallet

**Redemption info**

- Please present your printed Tesco digital gift card at the till. The barcode should be clearly printed and visible to the Tesco colleague. If using your mobile device, you will be asked to present the barcode to the scanner by the Tesco colleague.
- If the barcode does not scan then a Tesco colleague can manually input the digital gift card number (19 digits) and pin (4 digits) which will be located above the barcode.
- If this does not work then the Tesco digital gift card will require manual authorisation. Please go to the customer service desk for further help and information.

If you have any questions please call: **0345 6000 968**

### b. After the images have been downloaded. The barcode will now show.

**TESCO Gift Card**

**Your Tesco digital gift card**

**One card, thousands of choices.**

**TESCO Gift Card**

Your £ 15.00 digital gift card

CARD NUMBER 5045075014429215123 PIN 4604

**Gift card value: £ 15.00**

Please keep your digital gift card number secure. Your card number is unique and the total value can only be redeemed once.

**Spending in store**

- You can spend your Tesco digital gift card at any UK Tesco store
- You cannot redeem your digital gift card in Tesco petrol stations
- To spend in store, simply print it out and present at the till with the barcode clearly visible
- For convenience, your digital gift card can be cut out and stored in your wallet

**Redemption info**

- Please present your printed Tesco digital gift card at the till. The barcode should be clearly printed and visible to the Tesco colleague. If using your mobile device, you will be asked to present the barcode to the scanner by the Tesco colleague.
- If the barcode does not scan then a Tesco colleague can manually input the digital gift card number (19 digits) and pin (4 digits) which will be located above the barcode.
- If this does not work then the Tesco digital gift card will require manual authorisation. Please go to the customer service desk for further help and information.

Right click or tap on the message at the top of your email to download images

If your barcode won't scan after downloading images, please follow the trouble-shooting steps below:

- The brightness of your mobile phone's screen display may not be high enough
- The full barcode may not be showing on screen - landscape works better
- It may not work if you have damage to your mobile phone's screen

- d. In-store supermarket colleagues may be able to make adjustments as necessary and if the barcode continues to fail to scan the number can be manually entered at the till
- e. If you receive an invalid error message when scanning or entering your eGift card, you should contact the in-store customer helpdesk for further information

Please note that if your eGift card barcode cannot be scanned, most supermarkets can process your voucher by entering the eGift card code number. Please refer to [Q13](#).

## 16. I can't see the barcode in the eGift card email

This is because some email inbox providers automatically switch off the downloading of images for new emails. You should see a prompt to 'Display images' or 'Download full message' to see the barcode ([see Q15](#)). Please note that some supermarkets require you to click on a link in the email to see the barcode in an internet browser instead.

We recommend downloading your eGift cards before you leave the house to do your shopping, or whilst connected to WiFi in case of internet connectivity problems in-store.

## 17. How long does the supermarket eGift card last for?

Supermarket	Expiry
Sainsbury's	24 months from last transaction
Tesco	5 years from last transaction
Asda	24 months from last transaction
Morrisons	12 months expiry
Waitrose	24 months from last transaction
M&S food	24 months from last transaction
McColl's (including RS McColl's and Martin's)	31/12/2021 expiry
Aldi	5 years from activation
Iceland	2 years
Company Shop Group	12 months

For more T&Cs, please refer to the supermarket's website.

## 18. Can the vouchers be used in-store and online?

Supermarket	In-store	Online
Sainsbury's	Yes	Yes
Tesco	Yes	No
Asda	Yes	Yes
Morrisons	Yes	No
Waitrose (John Lewis)	Yes	Yes
M&S food	Yes	No
McColl's (including RS McColl's and Martin's)	Yes	No
Aldi	Yes	No
Iceland	Yes	No
Company Shop Group	Yes	No

\*For T&Cs, please refer to the supermarket's website.

## 19. I have ordered an eGift card, but it hasn't come through to my email?

Firstly, check your junk mail and/or trash folder. If it still hasn't arrived within 24 hours, you can request for the eGift card to be resent to the same email address by completing an online form here:

<https://cdn.edenred.uk.com/select/eGift-card-resent.html>

If the eGift card was sent to the wrong email address and you need it to be resent to a different email, please send the below information to [freeschoolmealsparentscarers@edenred.com](mailto:freeschoolmealsparentscarers@edenred.com):

- Incorrect email address you entered
- New email address you would like it resent to
- eGift card selected e.g Sainsbury's
- eGift card value
- Date and approximate time you ordered the eGift card

## 20. What happens if I have a smartphone but no data when I'm at the supermarket?

We suggest ordering your eGift card at home when connected to WIFI before you go to the supermarket. Take a screenshot of the eGift card barcode before going to the supermarket as this should still scan in-store.

## 21. I'm not able to get to the supermarket.

You can forward the supermarket eGift card to someone else to purchase goods on your behalf if you're not able to get to the supermarket. The eGift card email contains a link to a barcode which can be presented at the till in-store, just like a gift card. Some eGift cards can be spent online, [please see Q18](#).

## 22. How often will I receive the supermarket voucher?

The school will have flexibility in how often they send you an eCode or an eGift card. Please contact your school directly for any queries relating to eligibility or the frequency and value of your eCodes.

## 23. I have more than one child, will I receive multiple eCodes?

This will be at the discretion of your school who may issue an eCode for each of your children or, alternatively, may send one eCode to you, for the total value of your children's free school meal entitlement. If you have an enquiry about a child's eligibility or the value and frequency of vouchers, please contact the child's school administrator directly.

## 24. My M&S voucher says £15 when it should be £20

The value printed on your eGift card initially will be the amount requested by your schools. It will not include any promotions set by individual retailers. M&S will add a further £5 to the same £15 eGift card within a few hours of receipt. This is being fully managed by M&S. For queries about the promotion or to check the balance of your M&S eGift card, [please visit their website](#) or phone M&S on 0333 014 8000. Calls to M&S will cost no more than a local call from a landline, and for mobile packages these numbers will be included in any inclusive minutes.