



Holy Souls RC Primary School

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Headteacher: Mrs Danielle Ellison

Chair of Governors: Miss Margaret Wells

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Dear Parents/Carers

Cost of Living Support

At Holy Souls, we recognise the difficulty that many people are facing with cost of living issues, in particular due to the rise in fuel, energy and food prices. Below we have provided details and links to national and local sources of advice, support and financial assistance that may be able to help you and your family.

School Support:

- ❖ Free School Meals - the government's criteria for eligibility can be viewed at <https://www.blackburn.gov.uk/schools-and-education/school-meals>. We would strongly encourage all eligible parents to apply for free school meals, even if your child intends to bring a packed lunch.

Local Support:

- ❖ Blackburn with Darwen can offer help in a number of different ways to support those in financial difficulty, including helping to pay for emergency costs like food and bills. Please see link here <https://www.blackburn.gov.uk/cost-living-support/household-support-scheme>.

Support with Food:

- ❖ If you are struggling to pay for food, you might be able to get a referral to a food bank for emergency food. You can find out more on the following link - <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/using-a-food-bank/>
- ❖ If you are more than 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under four, you may be entitled to get help to buy healthy food and milk. Find out more and apply on the <https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/>

Warm and welcome places:

- ❖ Local libraries are warm and welcome spaces, where you can find:
 - A warm drink
 - A space to sit
 - Free computers and Wi-Fi
 - Charging points for digital equipment
 - Events and activities
 - Staff support to find information
- ❖ This is the link to find opening times, facilities and what is on locally at various libraries. <https://bwdlibraries.spydus.co.uk/cgi-bin/spydus.exe/MSGTRN/WPAC/HOME>

Financial Support:

- ❖ Turn2Us is a charity helping people living in poverty in the UK, specialising in information on welfare benefits and charitable grants. Available by telephone (0800 802 2000) and online at <https://www.turn2us.org.uk>
- ❖ Stepchange is the UK's leading debt charity offering expert debt service and free debt management. Available by telephone (0800 138 1111) and online at <https://www.stepchange.org>
- ❖ Money and Pensions Service - a government service providing impartial and free guidance on money and pensions. Available by telephone (0800 138 7777) and online at <https://moneyandpensionsservice.org.uk>
- ❖ MoneySavingExpert - a consumer finance and discussion website focussed on providing advice and tips on how to save money, including a dedicated cost of living crises section. Available online at <https://www.moneysavingexpert.com>

Household bills and goods:

- ❖ British Gas Energy Trust - a charitable trust providing advice on energy bills and grants paid directly to energy suppliers to help clear debts. Available online only at <https://britishgasenergytrust.org.uk>
- ❖ Ofcom - Ofcom has a list of available social tariffs; these are cheaper broadband and phone packages for people who claim Universal Credit, Pension Credit and some other benefits. Available online at <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/news-centre/2022/tips-for-cutting-phone-broadband-and-pay-tv-costs>
- ❖ CCWater - the Consumer Council of Water is a statutory consumer body for the water industry in England. They have an advice hub with information and tools to help reduce water bills and access financial schemes. Available online at <https://www.cwater.org.uk/households/help-with-my-bills> (please note: Every water company should have a social tariff scheme to help low-income families - check with your provider for more information.)
- ❖ Freecycle - a grassroots and non-profit organisation that allows people to claim household items for free. Available online at <https://www.freecycle.org>
- ❖ Family Fund - (parents of disabled or seriously ill children only) - this charity provides families raising a disabled, or seriously ill child, on low incomes with wide-ranging grants for essential items, such as kitchen appliances, clothing, bedding and play equipment or technology. Available online at <https://www.familyfund.org.uk/grants>
- ❖ Energy debt grants - a few energy suppliers offer grants to customers in need. Check with your supplier's website or contact them directly for more information.

Holy Souls School is a Roman Catholic Primary School in the Diocese of Salford and the Borough of Blackburn with Darwen



Government benefits and support:

- ❖ Universal Credit - a monthly government payment to help with living costs for those on low income. Available to apply online at <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit/how-to-claim>
- ❖ Short Term Benefit Advance - those in urgent financial need may be able to get an advance on benefit payments, which is paid back later through benefits without interest. Find out more at <https://www.gov.uk/short-term-benefit-advance>
- ❖ Cost of living payments - a government support package to help mitigate the cost-of-living crisis. Factsheet available online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-statement-2022-cost-of-living-support-factsheet/cost-of-living-support-factsheet> Payments are made automatically to those who are eligible so there is no need to apply - if you think you are eligible but did not receive a payment, make a report online at <https://secure.dwp.gov.uk/report-a-missing-cost-of-living-payment/welcome>

Housing and rent:

- ❖ ACORN - a community union that can provide support and advice for those who rent on housing issues and tenants' rights. Get in touch online <https://www.acorntheunion.org.uk>
- ❖ Council Tax reduction - low-income households might be able to get a council tax reduction. see if you might be eligible online at <https://www.gov.uk/council-tax/who-has-to-pay> and contact your local council for more information.
- ❖ Shelter - housing charity that runs local services. You can access their emergency helpline (0808 800 4444) and find advice online at https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice

Please note: In all instances where you have an emergency expense issues, such as paying rent, you should contact your local Citizens Advice Service and Local Council.

Please also be mindful of scams during this time, never give your personal or bank details to anyone without being sure of their identity.

We hope you find this information useful should you need to use it.

Your sincerely

Mrs Danielle Ellison
Headteacher

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