



# Free school meals

## Compliments Select Parent and Carer FAQs

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

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

**eCode** – this is the 16 digit code which your school may email or text to you. You'll need this code to access [www.freeschoolmeals.co.uk](http://www.freeschoolmeals.co.uk) and choose your supermarket eGift card. You cannot use the eCode directly with the retailer, **it must be exchanged for an eGift card**.

**eGift card** – each supermarket has their own eGift card. To order your eGift, redeem your 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 instore at the chosen supermarket. Alternatively your school may order your eGift card for you and print it and post it, 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 at home before going to the store.

To select your supermarket eGift card, follow the steps below:

1. Copy 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).

Read the [How to use your free school meals voucher user guide](#) for more information.

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

- 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.
- If you received the eCode directly from your school by post or text message:
  - 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.
  - 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.
- 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 further support.

## 4. What supermarkets can I pick from?

The below supermarkets are available:

- Morrisons
- Tesco
- Sainsbury's
- Asda
- Waitrose (John Lewis)
- M&S food
- Aldi
- McColl's (including RS McColl's and Martin's)

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

This is stated in the email sent to you by the school.

## 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.

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

You can mix and match different supermarket retailers within the same order, provided the total value you've chosen for each is equal to total 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.

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

The expiry date for a specific eCode will be included in the eCode email. eCodes ordered by your school before 31st May will expire after 4 months. eCodes ordered by your school on or after 1st June will expire after 2 months.

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

The eGift card is issued to you in respect of the free school meal benefit and will only be accepted in store for the purchase of food and groceries.

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

The value will be present on the eGift card itself.

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

A supermarket eGift card is a digital voucher. The eGift card email contains a link to a barcode which 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. Please note that most but not all supermarkets can enter the eGift card code if the barcode does not scan. Please see the table below:

Supermarket	Expiry
Sainsbury's	By scanning the barcode or entering your eGift card code
Tesco	By scanning the barcode or entering your eGift card code
Asda	By scanning the barcode or entering your eGift card code
Morrisons	By scanning the barcode only
Waitrose (John Lewis)	By scanning the barcode or entering your eGift card code
M&S food	By scanning the barcode or entering your eGift card code
Aldi	By scanning a printed version of your barcode or entering your eGift card code
McColl's (including RS McColl's and Martin's)	By scanning the barcode or entering your eGift card code

If you have issues scanning your barcode, please refer to [Q14](#).

Some eGift cards can be used to purchase online. Please see [Q16](#).

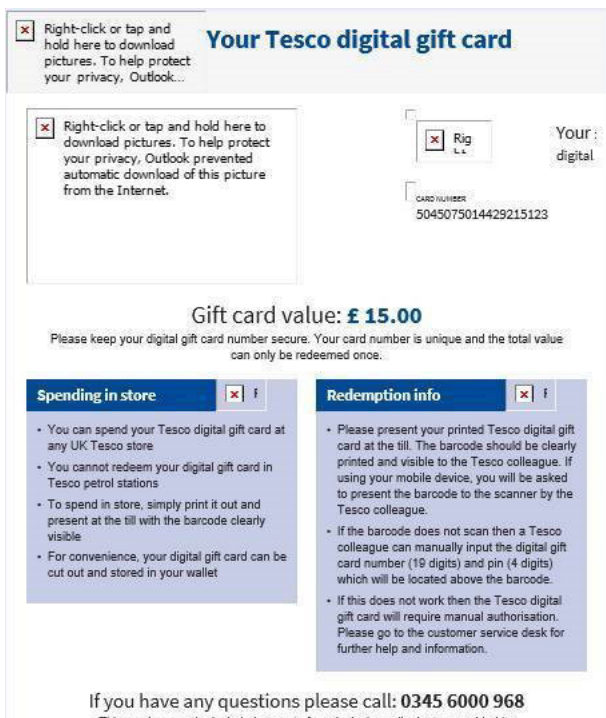
## 13. Can I get a refund for my eGift card?

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

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

You will need to download 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.

1. Before images have been downloaded.  
The barcode will not show.



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



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:

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

Please refer to [Q12](#).

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

Please see the table below:

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 (John Lewis)	24 months from last transaction
M&S food	24 months from last transaction
Aldi	5 years from last transaction
McColl's (including RS McColl's and Martin's)	31/12/2021 expiry

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

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

Please see the table below:

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

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

## 17. My school has ordered an eCode for me, 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 4 days, please contact your school to ensure that they have your correct email address. If your eCode has been sent to the incorrect email address, the school can cancel this order and resend the eCode to the correct email address. If this still doesn't work, your school can contact Edenred.

## 18. 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, please contact Edenred: [freeschoolmealsparentscarers@edenred.com](mailto:freeschoolmealsparentscarers@edenred.com) who can look into this for you.

If you receive an error message when trying to redeem your code on the free school meals website, please refer to [Q3](#) for guidance.

## 19. 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. 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.

## 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 ok 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.

## 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. The eCode can be redeemed for a supermarket eGift card and the expiry is included within your eCode email - please see [Q8](#) for further details. The eGift cards have different expiry dates – please see [Q15](#) for further details.

## 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.