# Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme 2024-25

## Provider Guide

## Introduction

This guide is for current and prospective HAF providers. It describes how the HAF programme works in Merton, our ambitions and the standards we expect. It should be used in conjunction with the Grant Application / Delivery Plan Template.

HAF Grant Agreements in 2024-25 will cover school holidays in Easter, May half-term, Summer, October half-term and Christmas in 2024 and the 2025 February half-term. These HAF Grant Agreements may be extended by up to a further year.

Merton will use the Wonde Holiday Activities Software and service to distribute HAF vouchers to eligible families and to administer their bookings and attendance.

Providers should deliver sessions of four hours or more[[1]](#footnote-1). Eligible children will have HAF vouchers in each holiday for the number of sessions as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Holiday** | **No of Sessions** |
| Easter 2024 | 4 |
| May half-term 2024 | 4 |
| Summer 2024 | 12 |
| October half-term 2024 | 4 |
| Christmas 2024 | 2 |
| February 2025 | 2 |

Providers may choose how many sessions to deliver in each holiday. They are not required to deliver in every holiday. Overall, Merton is seeking to partner with a rich and diverse portfolio of providers which delivers a sufficient capacity of rich and diverse provision in sufficient volume across all holidays.

Providers who are not required to register with Ofsted are nevertheless encouraged to do so. This would enable fee-paying parents to claim childcare tax credit cover up to 85% of the cost, particularly those on lower incomes. It would also facilitate the tax-free childcare scheme. Both these schemes would help make holiday activities more affordable to parents who do not qualify for benefits-related free school meals and could improve the viability of HAF provision.

## National Requirements

The Department for Education has set out national expectations for HAF provision, which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/holiday-activities-and-food-programme/holiday-activities-and-food-programme-2023>. While Merton may be flexible in applying DfE guidance, providers should assume that the criteria in the DfE guidance will be applicable unless expressly advised otherwise.

## Eligibility

Merton aims to distribute HAF Vouchers to all children and young people between 5 and 15 years old who are living in, and/or being educated in Merton who meet one or more of the following criteria:

* claiming benefits-related free school meals (this covers 85% or more of participants);
* have a social worker or family support worker;
* Young Carers;
* Ukrainians on the two settlement schemes and children of refugees;
* Identified by their school as facing other particularly challenging circumstances;
* Siblings of any children and young people meeting the above criteria.

HAF providers may also offer places to children in families not eligible for HAF funding, who will either pay to attend, or for whom alternative funding can be found. Existing holiday schemes, financially viable through charging fees, are welcome to participate in the HAF programme, though the HAF offer must be delivered to eligible children without charge. Providers may opt to charge HAF-eligible children for extra hours in addition to the 4 hours funded by HAF, or for extra sessions beyond their entitlement.

The activities should enable and encourage children and young people to:

* eat healthily;
* be active;
* take part in engaging and enriching activities which support the development of resilience, character and wellbeing along with their wider educational attainment;
* be safe and not to be socially isolated
* have a greater knowledge of health and nutrition;
* be more engaged with school, community and other local services;

## Food requirements

Clubs must provide at least one meal a day (breakfast, lunch or tea) and all food provided at the club (including snacks) must meet school food standards. Providers must offer children predominantly hot food in Christmas and February holidays. They may opt to offer cold food in Easter, May, Summer and October holidays where they do not have access to on-site cooking facilities. All food provided as part of the programme must comply with regulations on food preparation and consider allergies and dietary requirements and preferences as well as any religious or cultural requirements for food.

Providers should ensure there is something to eat for children who arrive hungry and that drinks and snacks are provided throughout the session.

## HAF Grants and Awards

For mainstream provision, Merton’s HAF Grants will be based around £25 per session for up to 20 sessions each day at each venue, and £20 per session for each subsequent session.

Merton will award a minimum number of sessions[[2]](#footnote-2) to each HAF provider and will pay half of the anticipated HAF Grant to each provider in advance for each holiday. A quarter of the remaining grant will be paid in proportion to sessions booked through the Holiday Activities platform, and a quarter in proportion to attendance.

Merton may, by agreement, award additional sessions beyond the minimum to providers who are able and willing to deliver them, and where resources allow. Merton will pay £10 for each additional session booked and a further £10 for each of those sessions attended by an eligible child.

Providers can deliver “double-days” for trips where the journey time would make an ordinary 4-hour HAF session impracticable. These should last for at least 7 hours from drop-off to pick-up and must be agreed in advance with Merton.

Mainstream providers delivering more than 25 sessions per day are encouraged to apply for additional SEN funding of £80 per day to fund an additional member of staff to support SEN needs within their provision. For large provisions, it may be possible to be funded for two additional staff members.

A number of specialist SEND providers will be funded at different rates.

## Programme Requirements

### Safeguarding

All HAF providers working with children will need to show they have policies and procedures which demonstrate and explain their safeguarding arrangements. These policies should include safeguarding, health and safety, insurance, accessibility and inclusiveness. Where HAF provision is OFSTED-registered, clubs must also be compliant with the Ofsted requirements for working with children.

We are happy to work with providers to ensure they have appropriate policies and practice in place and working effectively.

Providers must maintain a staff DBS log which shows, for each staff member, their name, DBS number and issue date. These logs should be available for inspection during Quality Assurance visits.

## How to Apply to be a HAF Provider in 2024-25

Interested providers should complete and submit a completed Application and Delivery Plan to [HAF@merton.gov.uk](mailto:HAF@merton.gov.uk) by 5pm on 14 February 2024.

## Assessment Criteria

Applications will be assessed firstly for compliance:

* Required policies etc have been received:
  + Safeguarding Policy (essential)
  + Site Safeguarding Notice (essential)
  + Public Liability Insurance (essential)
  + First Aid Certificates (essential)
  + Site Health and Safety Plan/Risk Assessment (essential)
  + Excursion Health and Safety Plan/Risk Assessment(s) (necessary for providers undertaking excursions)
  + Food Hygiene Certificates (necessary if food is being prepared on the premises)
* A venue has been identified and a Premises Agreement secured.
* All parts of the application have been completed.

Where applications are not compliant, providers will be notified and given 48 hours to remedy any shortcomings.

Compliant applications will be assessed on the following weighted criteria.

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| Criterium | Assessment | Weighting |
| Track record of delivering holiday or other relevant provision. | From Merton Quality Assurance Visits or through references | 20% |
| Management and Staff | Level of experience and qualifications of leadership, site managers and staff | 15% |
| Merton footprint | Level of current engagement with relevant part of Merton community | 10% |
| Marketing proposals | How will you attract sufficient participation? This may need to be extensive for a new provider | 10% |
| Proposed activities | Will they provide an enjoyable, enriching and inspiring experience | 20% |
| Food Offer | Will food be nutritious and exciting. | 15% |
| Hours of operation | Is the provision open for more than 4 hours | 5% |
| Ofsted registered | Ofsted registered, plan to register, or neither | 5% |

1. Providers offering swimming lessons, bike lessons and activities for children with SEN may offer fewer hours. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. A “session” means one place for one child to attend on one day. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)