

MAYOR OF LONDON

Date: 11 December 2023

Dear Headteacher,

As the end of term approaches, I wanted to write to you to thank you for all your support in making the Universal Free School Meals programme a success. Together we have achieved the remarkable accomplishment of providing more than 10 million free lunches to primary school pupils in state funded schools in London since September. And, as part of our emergency intervention to help with the cost-of-living-crisis, we will continue to fund millions more Free School Meals until at least the end of this academic year – ensuring children don't go hungry and saving families hundreds of pounds.

This letter also provides you with some useful information which I hope will be helpful to you and your teams.

Letter to families

Please see attached a letter for families in your school from the Mayor of London. Your support in the distribution of this to all families, parents and carers of the children in key stage 2 would be invaluable as this letter contains a helpful reminder about the importance of pupil premium and registering for government funded free school meals. We will also be translating the letter into several additional languages, and these will be available on our website to download.

Donated Kitchen Equipment

I am pleased to announce that we've received offers of donations from various companies offering commercial standard white goods and kitchen equipment. This includes items such as fridges, ovens and dishwashers.

To ensure fairness we have implemented an eligibility criteria to ensure equitable distribution. More information on the criteria and how to apply can be found in the guidance note, Donated Kitchen Equipment for Universal Free School Meals - Offer guide & application details, which accompanies this letter. Please note that for any schools that are unsuccessful, we will keep details on file for any future donations we receive.

Take-Up over 90%

Schools have done an incredible job in encouraging take up of universal free school meal offer. Initial funding allocations were made on an assumed take up of 90% but with a guarantee that if any take-up beyond this would be funded.

I am pleased to confirm that guidance has now been shared with your borough and put on our website about how to claim this money if you have a take-up rate higher than 90%. Please see here for more information: [Claiming additional funding for meals uptake above 90 per cent | London City Hall](#)

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Support for Schools

Our online resource hub for schools is being continually updated with resources for schools. Most recently we have updated some translated assets for communicating with families in different languages and the recording of our most recent good practice webinar sessions on pupil premium:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/10JFUt0zpDJUWUOLkSfX3303dcl2Ha1Nn?usp=sharing>

Independent Evaluation

We are working with independent evaluation partners to understand the outcomes of the Mayor's expansion of Free School Meals. More information of the organisations we are working with, and the focus of the evaluation will be on our website in the new year.

Please note, as part of this work, evaluation colleagues will be contacting schools in January with a survey to understand your experiences of the policy so far. We hope that you and your teams will be able to participate in this.

The efforts of your school's staff are truly commendable and continue to make a meaningful difference to communities in our city. I wish you and your colleagues a wonderful winter break and a Happy New Year.

If you have any queries in the meantime, please do send them to freeschoolmeals@london.gov.uk and we will get back to you as soon as we can.

Yours faithfully,



Joanne McCartney AM
Deputy Mayor for Children and Families