

MAYOR OF LONDON

May 2025

Dear Headteacher,

I hope this letter finds you well as you begin the Summer term.

I am writing to provide you with updates on the Mayor of London's Universal Free School Meals (UFSM) programme and to provide you with a letter from the Mayor to families in your community.

Letter to Families

Please find attached a letter from the Mayor of London addressed to families of Key Stage 2 pupils in your school, confirming that there will be funding for UFSM in London's state primary schools for as long as Sadiq Khan is Mayor of London.

Your support in the distribution of this letter to all families, parents and carers of children would be invaluable. This letter also contains a helpful reminder about the importance of pupil premium funding and registering for Government-funded free school meals to support your school with maintaining all the pupil premium funding you are entitled to.

Programme Impact

I am delighted that our combined efforts to support families are having a significant impact on Londoners, with the first independent evaluation of the policy finding it is improving family finances and the health and wellbeing of children and parents.

If you would like to read the findings, please find the report here:

<https://urbanhealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/loUH-Free-School-Meals-Report.pdf>

These results wouldn't be possible without the efforts of you and your colleagues, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you again.

Year 3 Funding

The Mayor's budget for 2025/26 includes £147.5m funding for the third year of the scheme, and funding will continue for as long as Sadiq Khan is Mayor. Funding will continue to be issued to you via your Local Authority. Final allocation details will be shared with your Local Authority once this year's census data on pupil numbers has been published by the Department for Education.

Funding for 2025/26 will continue to be £3 per meal, which is a 13% increase on our funding in the first year and reflects the feedback on implementation we heard from schools.

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Borough allocations will be calculated by multiplying this by the number of pupils and the number of school days (190), with an assumed uptake rate of 87%. In line with previous years, we will continue to make provision for uptake above this rate, so that no school will face any shortfall in funding if its uptake is above 87%, to ensure that all children in London's state primary schools receive the benefits of these meals.

Water Only Schools Survey

As part of the grant principles for the Universal Free School Meals, we encourage boroughs and schools to support the adoption of water only policies. As part of this work, we are trying to better understand the current uptake of the programme and any barriers to becoming a Water Only School.

If you haven't done so already, please take a moment to complete the Mayor of London's Water Only Schools Survey by 31 May 2025: <https://forms.office.com/e/M4d9UtHRc4> If you have any questions, or would like further information about this work, please contact: Alex.Godbold@london.gov.uk

Support for Schools

We continue to do as much as possible to support schools. As part of this we will continue to share best practice, templates, FAQs, guidance, webinar recordings and other resources on our hub which can be found here:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/10JFUt0zpDJUWUOLkSfX3303dcL2Ha1Nn?usp=sharing>

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

Yours sincerely,



Joanne McCartney AM

Deputy Mayor for Children and Families