MAYOR OF LONDON

Date: 9 January 2024

Dear Parent/Carer,

As the new term begins, I wanted to share some fantastic news about my Universal Free School Meals programme – it's extending until the middle of 2025!

As the Mayor of London, I'm so proud we've funded more than 17 million free school meals for around 287,000 primary school children in London since September.

However, I know times are still tough for many Londoners and I am committed to doing all that I can to support families through these difficult times.

I am now extending funding for Universal Free School Meals for another academic school year between September 2024 and July 2025. This means that primary school aged children who attend a state funded school in London will continue to receive a healthy, nutritious meal so that no child goes hungry in the classroom, and all pupils can better concentrate on their studies.

I am also increasing the amount of money boroughs and schools receive to £3 per meal. The grant that I provide is now 18.5% higher than the offer from national Government for Universal Infant Free School Meals.

This extension will provide a safety net for families and could save parents and carers up to £1,000 per child across the two years.

Eating a nutritious meal everyday is hugely beneficial to children and families both in the short and long term. As someone who received free school meals myself growing up, I know they can be a lifeline, helping children to reach their full potential.

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As Mayor of London, I also fundamentally believe that feeding our children shouldn't be an optional luxury but should rank as one of our society's top priorities. Making sure our children are properly fed and healthy is vital to building a better London for everyone – a city that is fairer, safer, more inclusive and more prosperous for all. This is why I will continue to call on the Government to step forward and provide the funding needed to make our Universal Free School Meal programme permanent.

Even though your child is receiving their free school meals automatically, it is still vitally important – if you have not done so already – to complete your school or borough's short registration form in case your child is eligible for extra funding for their school from the Government, worth over £1,300 per year. That's more money for extracurricular activities, teacher development and support for children who need it most. This will ensure you'll also receive any other benefits you may be entitled to, like food vouchers during the holidays. Ask your school for more info or visit your borough website.

For more information about this and anything else about the scheme please visit our online hub: https://www.london.gov.uk/free-school-meals

Families who are having difficulties with their financial situation can also access advice and support by visiting my cost-of-living hub here: https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/communities-and-social-justice/help-cost-living

I wish you and your family a happy and healthy 2024. I will continue to do everything I can to support families across London.

Warmest wishes,

Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London

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