MAYOR OF LONDON

London Borough of Merton **Date:** July 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

I'm delighted to inform you that City Hall is ensuring all primary school children who attend state schools in London will receive **free school meals** for the full academic year, starting this September.

As Mayor of London, I know parents/carers are really struggling with the cost-of-living crisis right now. That's why I've taken the decision to provide funding to expand on the Government's limited existing free school meals offer. This means all state funded primary school children in London are now eligible for free school meals.

The funding we're providing will help up to 270,000 primary school children in London, like yours, access free school meals and could **save your family upwards of £440 across the year**.

Your child will receive their free school meals automatically, but it's vitally important that you still complete your school or borough's registration form in case your child is eligible for extra funding for their school from the Government, worth £1,300 per year. That's extra money to spend on enrichment activities, teacher development, and targeted support for the children that need it most. Depending on how schemes operate in your borough, it may also entitle you to other benefits like food vouchers during the holidays. There is more information about registration in your borough here: https://www.merton.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools/free-school-meals.



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Those parents/carers whose children already qualify for free school meals under the Government's existing offer must also continue to apply for free school meals as before.

My administration has taken the unprecedented step of providing this funding because we're deeply concerned by the number of primary school children going hungry in London's classrooms. Eligibility criteria for the Government's existing free school meals offer is strict, which means many parents/carers and children who need this helping hand have been missing out. But from September – thanks to our intervention – that will all change as part of our effort to build a better London for everyone.

As someone who received free school meals myself, I'm incredibly proud that we're able to step up and provide this crucial lifeline to London's families during such tough economic times. I firmly believe that every child deserves the chance to be able to grow up healthy and thrive, regardless of their background or circumstances. But for this to happen, children must be able to access healthy, nutritious meals.

My online hub for families provides all the information you need about our scheme. Please find the link here: https://www.london.gov.uk/free-school-meals.

Families who are struggling 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.

Your school will be in touch with more details of how you can take up the offer of the free school meals. I wish your family a happy and healthy academic year – and I hope they enjoy their free school meals.

Yours sincerely,

Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London



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