



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

5th January 2023

Jean Contrevent,

RE: FREE SCHOOL MEALS

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of free school meals to all children in educational settings; I have read your comments on this issue with interest.

I believe it is imperative that children have regular healthy and balanced meals throughout the day to ensure they are able to thrive in the classroom. The Government is also keenly aware of the impact that the cost of living challenge is having on families across the country.

Over a third of pupils in England currently receive free school meals in educational settings and the Government has just announced a further investment in the National School Breakfast Programme, extending the programme for another year until July 2024, backed by up to £30 million.

The department spends over £1 billion each year on free school meals, including through the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme and school breakfast clubs. This includes around £600 million on Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM). In June 2022, the Government allocated £18 million of additional funding for UIFSM to help schools provide for the 1.25 million children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 with a free, healthy and nutritious lunch, in recognition of the rising cost of living.

The Government funds over £200 million a year on HAF, which provides healthy meals and holiday club places to children from low-income families. The Government is allocating £30 million over two years for the National School Breakfast Programme, which benefits over 2,000 schools across the country.

As announced in the Autumn Statement, for those who require extra support, the Government is providing an additional £1 billion to help with the cost of household essentials for the 2023-24 financial year, on top of what has already been provided since October 2021, bringing total funding for this support to £2.5 billion.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,
T. Pursglove

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE