

WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL

STATEMENT OF DECISION

SUBJECT: EXTENDING THE FREE MEAL OFFER TO NURSERIES AND SECONDARY WESTMINSTER PUPILS

Notice is hereby given that Cabinet Member for Young People, Culture and Learning , Cabinet Member for Young People, Culture and Learning, has made the following executive decision on the above mentioned subject for the reasons set out below.

(**Summary of Decision**

The Cabinet Member for Young People, Culture and Learning approves:

- a total of £932,030 (£2.47) to enable nurseries to develop a universal meal offer based on £2.47 per meal to nurseries for academic year 2023-24.
- a total of £771,780 to enable schools to provide a Free Lunch Offer to resident pupils in KS3 (Years 7-9) academic year 2023-24.
- A total of £189,924 to top up the meal price for the Mayor of London's offer from £2.65 per meal to £3 per meal for the academic year 2023-24.

The Cabinet Member for Young People, Culture and Learning accepts the GLA's allocation of £1,390,478.00 and transferring this to primary schools so that they are able to implement a free lunch offer.

Reasons for Decision

Cost-of-Living

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- The Cost-of-Living crisis is one of the greatest challenges currently facing the city council and other Local Authorities. In Westminster, around a quarter of households across the city (approximately 32,000 households) are particularly vulnerable to rises in living costs, with some people facing extreme hardship. At a meeting of Full Council on 21st September 2022, Councillors approved a motion to declare a Cost-of-Living Emergency, stating that the scale of the challenge needs "urgent and substantial action" from the Council, Government, and others with the ability to help.
- The impact on children and young people is a real concern, and we have growing evidence of families in Westminster finding themselves unable to cover the costs of necessities. Schools tell us that they are seeing a lot more families struggling, including those not eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), which is manifesting in what they can afford to put into a child's lunchbox. FSM play a crucial role in ensuring that all eligible children can eat a healthy and nutritious meal, which in turn supports their ability to learn and improves their mental health.

New Mayor of London Free School Meal Offer in Primary School Pupils

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- The original key decision committed the council to funding £2,781,784 of which £1,053,864 was allocated to fund the Spring and Summer terms in 2023 and £1,627,920 was allocated to fund the 2023/24 academic year. This cost was based on £3 per pupil per day.
- Since this decision was taken, the Mayor of London has made the decision to fund the extension of a free meal offer to primary aged pupils in London attending state schools. This will commence from September 2023 and will last one academic year. The Greater London Assembly (GLA) have allocated £1,390,478 for Westminster schools, and this is based on a meal cost of £2.65 per pupil per day and will be based on 190 days a year and at a take up of 90% of pupils.
- The Council has already allocated £1,014,814 for the Spring and Summer terms in 2023 for the Council led scheme that commenced in January 2023. However, as a result of the Mayor's offer, the Council will be able to extend the Free Lunch Offer to Support more pupils in the Borough.

Health, Wellbeing and Educational attainment

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- Currently, one in five children start school overweight or with obesity. Offering free nutritional meals from an early age, will enable children and their families to develop good habits in relation to healthy eating and nutritional meals. This in return, will enable children to access the early years curriculum more consistently as poor nutrition and development impacts not only children's health, but also their readiness to learn. This will enable our most vulnerable two-year-old children and all of our three- and four-year-old children to have the best possible start in life by developing good habits around their diet and nutrition, increasing their attendance and accessing education and learning more effectively. This additional offer to early years children could potentially have a huge impact on children's future attainment and in essence, improve their life chances.

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Summary of Decision

Reasons for Decision

**Stuart Love, Chief Executive,
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Publication Date: 23 August 2023

Implementation Date:

Reference: