



Rt Hon David Laws MP
Minister of State for Schools

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UNIVERSAL INFANT FREE SCHOOL MEALS: LOCAL AUTHORITY CAPITAL BIDDING ROUND

Dear colleague,



As you are aware, from the beginning of the current term, state-funded schools have been required in law to offer free meals to all their infant pupils. As I noted, when I wrote to you on 25 September, over 98% of eligible schools were serving hot meals to their infant pupils at the beginning of term and other schools were serving cold meals. This is a remarkable achievement, and I am grateful to all the school staff, caterers and local authority officers who have made it possible.

As I also said in my earlier letter to you, I want as many pupils as possible to benefit from this policy, and to ensure that in all instances the meals being provided are of as high a quality as possible. To help in this, the Department is now making an additional £20million of capital funding available for new projects aimed at enhancing kitchen and dining facilities. This is possible from funds available within the existing UIFSM budget. We are inviting local authorities to submit prioritised bids for funding to support the delivery of UIFSM in particular schools, including voluntary aided schools. Local authorities that wish to bid are asked to confirm that they have allocated the entire amount of UIFSM capital funding they have received from the Department to date in support of UIFSM implementation. Bidding guidance, including the criteria by which we will assess bids and an application form, is attached separately. The closing date for applications is Thursday 20 November.

Academies will be able to bid for funding separately through the Condition Improvement Fund (which replaces the ACMF) when that opens later this year.

Thank you once again for all your hard work to date in helping to provide infant pupils with free nutritious meals.

Yours sincerely,

we,



David Laws MP