



Rt Hon David Laws MP
Minister of State for Schools

Sanctuary Buildings 20 Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0370 000 2288 www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus

To all headteachers in schools with infant pupils

23 June 2014

Dear Headteacher,

Securing pupil premium money and communicating with parents about universal infant free school meals

As you know, from September 2014 there will be a statutory requirement for all state-funded schools in England to provide free school meals to all pupils in reception, year 1 and year 2.

I want to thank you for the huge amount of effort that you have put into making this happen at such a busy time, and I have included a letter to your school meals team to also thank them personally for all their hard work so far. I should be very grateful if you would pass this on to them.

I am aware that some headteachers are concerned that the introduction of universal infant free school meals (UIFSM) could make it more difficult to identify pupils for the purpose of securing accurate pupil premium (and other needs-led) funding allocations for 2015-16 onwards (2014-15 funding will be determined on the basis of the 2013-14 school censuses). On 8 April, I wrote to the Directors of Children's Services in each local authority in England, explaining the importance of continuing to register infant pupils who would be eligible for free school meals under the existing criteria, and asking local authorities to support schools in their efforts to do so.

We know that this issue can be resolved as it has been in those areas which are already providing free school meals to all primary pupils. We have also published good practice from those areas in the universal infants free school meals online toolkit, which you can find at:

<http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/toolkit/>

The Department for Education has, working with the NAHT, also developed the enclosed model registration form, based on the forms already being used by some local authorities, and accompanying guidance, which schools can use and

adapt to meet their own requirements.

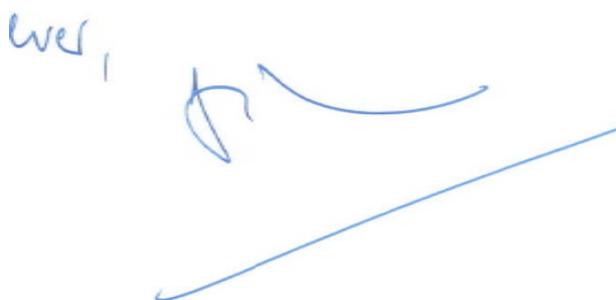
The form has been developed with the intention that all parents should be asked to complete it as part of the school enrolment process, regardless of their level of income. It will give schools the necessary information and parental permission to perform checks as necessary to confirm entitlement to free school meals under the current criteria, both at the time of enrolment and throughout the child's time at school. Use of the form is not mandatory – it is simply meant as a tool that schools can use if they so choose.

However, we think it is crucial that schools should consider actions of this type for the purposes of ensuring they receive all of the pupil premium they are entitled to.

In addition, we know that many schools will be starting to think about how best to communicate with parents about the introduction of UIFSM from September. With the help of NAHT and others, we have produced a model letter which you may want to draw on in writing to parents on this subject. That model letter is also enclosed.

I hope that you find this additional guidance helpful. If you have any queries about how best to put appropriate systems in place to maintain levels of FSM registration, please contact the UIFSM support service on 0800 680 0080 or at: info@childrensfoodtrust.org.uk.

Yours sincerely,



David Laws MP