



**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](http://www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus)

23 June 2014

**Dear School Meals team,**

As I am sure that you are all aware, the Government has decided that schools must offer a healthy free school lunch to all infant pupils in England from September this year. This is a vital and important change that will significantly improve children's health and their attainment.

I wanted to write to thank you personally for all your hard work in getting ready for this very significant policy. Excellence does not come about through government decree: it is driven by great school leaders and by you, school cooks, who need to be given the right circumstances and the right culture in which to flourish.

For some of you, the challenge of getting ready for September may seem daunting – getting your kitchens ready, recruiting new staff, increasing your meal numbers. But lots of help is available. Do make sure you are in regular contact with your school leaders.

There is also a 'toolkit' for schools, available at [www.schoolfoodplan.com/toolkit](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/toolkit) and a 'What Works Well' website ([www.schoolfoodplan.com/www](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/www)) that shows many great examples of creative solutions coming from school cooks and their kitchens. A free helpline has also been set up by the Children's Food Trust and LACA – call 0800 680 0080.

Last week we also published new food based standards and accompanying guidance, specifically for school cooks and caterers. The new standards are designed to make it easier for school cooks to create imaginative, flexible and nutritious menus. You can download them at [www.schoolfoodplan.com/standards](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/standards).

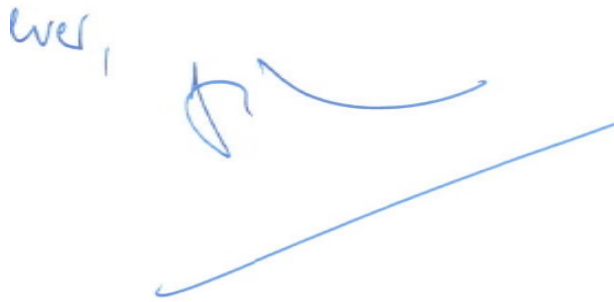
From my many visits to schools, I can see at first hand the hard work you and

your teams are already putting in to make sure that, come September, you will be ready.

The School Food Plan (which you can read at [www.schoolfoodplan.com](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com)) aims to transform what children eat in school and how they learn about food. The introduction of universal infant free school meals in September presents a huge opportunity for us to put food back at the heart of our schools. I am very grateful to you for all you are doing, and will be doing over the next few months, to make it a reality.

Thank you

Yours sincerely,



**David Laws MP**