



Scott Wickenden  
Deputy, St Helier No. 1  
Apt 11 The Courtyard St. Martins House  
Grand Route De Faldouet  
St. Martin, Jersey  
JE3 6UG

19 November 2021

Dear Deputy Wickenden,

Following Marcus Rashford's address to the British government and the extension of free school meals to include the holiday period in the UK, students at Victoria College have been disappointed to see a lack of similar provisions for pupils in Jersey, even during term time.

We are blessed to live on a wealthy island, but there are still many who struggle to make ends meet. According to recent studies, 1 in 5 Jersey households have difficulty financially coping. It is those households with children that struggle in particular, with the figure rising to 44% for single parent families.

It is imperative that we ensure children have the best possible start in life. After all, these children are our future. We do not want to see their potential curtailed simply because their families are unable to provide them with regular balanced meals. We think it is shameful that there are children in Jersey, who spend their days in school unable to concentrate on their learning simply because they are hungry. Data from the government's publication *Money Matters* illustrates that 14% of households in Jersey are materially deprived; this is not significantly different to the U.K. (13%). However, children in Jersey do not benefit from the same initiatives to ensure they do not go without food.

Moves have been made recently to attempt to put children first in Jersey and all schools are expected to become UN Rights Respecting schools. However, by neglecting to ensure children are fed, the government are in direct violation of Article 24 of the UN charter. We believe that the States of Jersey should realise their pledge to put children first and fulfil Article 24, ensuring that all children have the nutritious food they need to enable them to reach their full potential.

Children are going hungry and with 75% of people's jobs impacted by coronavirus and 27% of households forecasting their finances to deteriorate, the problem will only get worse. Now is the time to act. The provision of free school meals to pupils with parents on income support at Janvrin, St. Luke's and Samares Schools has been conducted successfully by Caring Cooks. This is a strong foundation to build upon, but we would like to see a formal commitment from the government that all students with parents on income support, regardless of the school they attend, will be provided with free school meals by September 2022 (in time for the start of the next academic year).

Yours sincerely,

**Charles Maloney** on behalf of Victoria College Food Poverty Advocacy Group  
and all the undersigned students

*Building successful futures*