

Minister for Children
and Education



19-21 Broad Street | St Helier
Jersey | JE2 3RR

Charles Maloney
Victoria College Food Poverty Advocacy Group

By email only

31 January 2022

Dear Charles,

Thank you for meeting me to share your concerns about free school meals in Jersey and handover your letter dated 19th November 2021. I am impressed by the thought and passion you; the advocacy group and all the signatories have shown for this issue.

I am unable to commit to your request that all students with parents on income support, regardless of the school they attend, will be provided with free school meals by September this year. This is not due to a lack of understanding, lack of funds or lack of political support, it is quite simply a logistical and resourcing issue that cannot be solved within that timescale.

I am directly responsible for 24 primary schools and currently only 3 of them have a servery area which enables the effective and safe delivery of nutritious hot lunches to the students. I am pleased to advise that another two schools will have serveries by the end of February, but this still leaves 19 schools with over 4,000 students, without the physical resources to do this safely.

The government is committed to consider a range of fiscal measures to improve access to a healthy balanced diet for key target groups through its [Food and Nutrition Strategy](#). The pilot programme of hot school meals in primary schools (delayed by covid) is an essential enabler of this commitment. Ministers need a solid evidence base from the pilot to create any required business case for funds to expand provision and properly plan procurement to ensure safety and quality are maintained.

Procuring and building 19 more serveries and a supplier who can deliver thousands of meals per day is not a simple task and must be done in accordance with the Public Finances Law and Manual which aims to support everyone working in Government on the guidelines around funding and spending public money. We must also ensure the safety, quality and nutrition that we all want.

I will ensure the pilot is completed and the necessary tendering process that follows, we are moving in the right direction to achieve your aims and I hope the above explanation helps with understanding why this cannot all be done in 2022.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Scott Wickenden", written over a horizontal line.

Deputy Scott Wickenden

Minister for Children and Education

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