



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BT

24th April 2026

Dear Education Secretary

I have been contacted by constituents raising concerns about the outdated school food standards. As they set out:

The school food standards in England currently state that schools must serve a portion of dairy daily, a portion of meat at least three times a week, and a portion of fish once every three weeks.

This misguided requirement impedes efforts to increase the consumption of fibre, fruit, and vegetables – which is vital in the effort to tackle childhood obesity. According to research published in BMJ Nutrition, Prevention & Health, three-quarters of secondary school children fall short of eating the recommended five daily portions of fruit and vegetables.

Children need a planet to live on, but meat and dairy are damaging the environment. More than half of the greenhouse gas emissions from UK school meals are attributed to meat. An extensive study published in Nature Food shows that people in the UK can lower their carbon footprint from food by 75% by going vegan.

For years, the Department for Education has promised a revision to the school food standards but remains slow to act. At a time of climate destruction and childhood health crises, this inaction is unacceptable.

Please urge the education secretary Bridget Phillipson to update the school food guidelines to remove the mandatory servings of meat (including fish) and dairy. Making this simple policy revision is essential to allow schools and caterers the freedom to offer sustainable and healthy choices, while ensuring they can deliver varied menus that meet the needs of their students.

I agree with these concerns raised by constituents and urge you to make this revision. Do you have plans to do so?

I look forward to hearing from you.

With thanks and best wishes,

Dr Ellie Chowns MP
Member of Parliament for North Herefordshire