



Lord Agnew Kt DL

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the School System
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Baroness Boycott
House of Lords
London
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Dear Lady Boycott,

31st ✓ October 2019

I am writing to you to provide a response to the Oral Parliamentary Question which was due to take place on Wednesday 6 November

It's a shame that this question will not now go ahead as planned because of the dissolution of parliament but I would like to take this opportunity to set out the work the government is doing in this area.

As you know, we welcomed the recent report from the Children's Future Food Inquiry which looked into this issue. Government is considering the recommendations and will respond in due course.

It is important that all pupils have access to healthy and nutritious meals at school, including pupils that are eligible for free school meals, and this government has delivered significant investments to ensure that all children are well nourished and develop healthy eating habits. This includes up to £26m in breakfast clubs (and further funding for 2020-21), delivering the £100m healthy pupils capital fund and introducing the holiday activities and food programme (including a further £9m for 2020). This summer we also launched the new healthy schools ratings scheme which celebrates the positive actions that schools are delivering in terms of healthy eating, healthy living and physical activity, and will also support schools to identify further actions they can take to improve.

In 2015 we implemented new School Food Standards which mean that the food children eat at school is healthy and nutritious, restricting foods high in fat, salt and sugar. Compliance with the School Food Standards is mandatory for all maintained schools. We also expect all academies and free schools to comply with the standards, and since 2014 we have made this an explicit requirement in their funding agreements.

If parents or pupils believe that the school is not following the standards, we would firstly advise them to take this up through the school's complaints policy. Where a parent is not satisfied with the response from the governing board,

they may complain to the Secretary of State who can then issue a direction to the school if necessary.

I believe that the School Food Standards have been transformational, but we need to do more to bring them into line with revised nutritional recommendations on sugar and fibre. We are funding Public Health England to provide expert nutritional advice and develop proposed new standards. This month they completed their modelling work and delivered proposals for updating the standards, which we will discuss with the expert advisory panel on 6 November. The revised standards will require secondary legislation, so we will need to find an appropriate timeslot within the wider parliamentary context.

I hope this answer has been useful and will place a copy in the house libraries.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Theodore Agnew', with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the signature to the right.

THEODORE AGNEW