

Labour commits to free school meals for all primary school children

Tomorrow (Thursday 6th April), Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the Labour Party, and Angela Rayner, Shadow Secretary of State for Education, will commit the next Labour Government to providing free school meals for all primary school children.

Labour will fund the policy by introducing VAT on private school fees. Labour's policy will benefit the educational attainment and health of all children while ending a subsidy to the privileged few.

Research confirmed by the National Centre for Social Research and the Institute for Fiscal Studies has shown offering universal access to free school meals improves educational attainment through improvements in pupils' productivity, enabling primary school pupils to advance by around two months on average.

The provision of free school meals also has been proven to improve the health of pupils through better nutrition – with over 90 percent of pupils eating a school lunch consuming food or drink containing vegetables or fruit (including fruit juice) compared with only 58 percent of pupils who eat packed lunches.

At the launch event in Lancashire, Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the Labour Party, will say:

“No child in the UK should go hungry at school. By charging VAT on private schools fees, Labour will make sure all primary school children, no matter what their background, get a healthy meal at school.

“The next Labour Government will provide all primary school children with a free school meal, invest in our schools, and make sure no child is held back because of their background.”

Angela Rayner, Labour's Shadow Education Secretary, will say:

“The Government's cuts to the school budget are making school meals worse and limiting the number of children that can be fed. This decision affects the educational attainment and health of pupils.

“While the Conservatives offer tax giveaways to their billionaire friends, they are cutting the schools budget and threatening the health and futures of all our children by denying children the basic right of a healthy lunch at school. By investing in our education system and providing free school meals for every primary school child, we will remove the stigma attached to free school meals, and improve health and attainment for all children.”