



F/T: 0300 244 4000
E: dfmcse@gov.scot

By email:
Directors of Education
Chief Executives

Our ref: EU SCHOOL MILK SCHEME

22 June 2020

Dear Colleague

I am aware that many local authorities and schools in Scotland participate in the EU school milk scheme which is administered by the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) and provides the opportunity to claim for a subsidy to help fund local free school milk schemes.

We expected that Scottish local authorities and schools would continue to be able to claim under this scheme until the end of the Brexit transitional period (31 December 2020) however we have been advised that the European Commission has decided that the UK will no longer be able to claim for subsidy under this scheme from October 2020. As such the RPA have advised that all final claims for subsidy must be submitted by participating local authorities and schools to them through the usual channels no later than the middle of July 2020.

The UK government have advised that they are considering challenging the EC decision and requesting that we continue to be able to claim under this scheme until 31 December 2020. However they advise that even if they do decide to challenge the decision, the outcome is not guaranteed and the process is slow meaning that confirmation is unlikely to be secured before the current final claim date of mid July 2020.

With this in mind you may wish to take steps to ensure that any claim for free school milk scheme subsidy that has been incurred up to the end of the current school year is submitted to the RPA no later than the middle of July 2020 in case an extension is not sought or secured by the UK government.

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While I would expect those local authorities and schools currently claiming under the scheme to be receiving updates from the RPA on this matter, I thought it was important to share this information with you in case you were not yet aware given that the deadline is less than four weeks away.

I have asked my officials to seek assurances from the RPA and UK government that they will provide local authorities and schools participating in the scheme with further updates in relation to the outcome of any decision to challenge the EC as this will determine whether or not local authorities and schools in Scotland are able to claim under this scheme when our schools return in August 2020.

Yours truly,
John Swinney

JOHN SWINNEY

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St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot



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