Dear (insert MSP)

**Will you commit to expanding universal free school meals to all?**

On International School Meals Day, I am writing to you as a supporter of the STUC Women’s Committee Campaign ‘Food for Thought’.

We are campaigning to expand universal free school meals to all young people attending publicly funded schools in Scotland.

The Scottish Government has made some welcome progress through offering universal free school meal to all primary 1 – 5 pupils, and further committing to expanding this to all primary pupils.

However, hunger, and the poverty-related stigma and shame that has long been associated with free school meals knows no age boundaries.

That is why, I am urging you to pledge your support to build on the existing progress of universal school meals provision available and support the campaign to expand the provision to all secondary school pupils.

I am also asking for your support to place pressure on the Scottish Government to accelerate the promised delivery of school meals for all primary pupils which has been further delayed.

The Scottish Government have rightly identified tackling child poverty as a key priority. No child or young person in Scotland should face hunger or experience any level of poverty in one of the wealthiest and most resourced nations in the world.

Families across Scotland were already facing bleak choices between eating and heating, and increasingly relying upon foodbanks to survive before the onset of the COVID pandemic and the subsequent cost of living crisis. Now, the stark reality is many are unable to afford to do either.

We believe the Scottish Government has a duty to safeguard and shield children and young people from the worst consequences of poverty and hunger. Many families are facing an ongoing food emergency, not just a one-off crisis, and far too many children and young people’s basic human rights to food are not being met.

Expanding universal school meals to all will help to: alleviate hunger and poverty, eliminate the stigma associated with school meals, support all young people’s nutrition, support with tackling the roots of the poverty related attainment gap, and build equity in our schools. Universal free school meals remain the best way to ensure that all young people have access to a healthy and nutritious meal at school, stigma-free.

Will you pledge your commitment and support for expanding universal free school meals to all young people?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Name