

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

TO: Education (Resources) Sub-Committee	Subject: UPTAKE OF FREE SCHOOL MEALS
From: Director of Education	
Date: 3 May 2001	
Ref: MM/BB/FLB	

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to highlight the reasons for the low uptake in free school meals and the action taken to increase uptake.

RECOMMENDATION

The education resources sub-committee is recommended to:-

- a) note the reasons cited for the low uptake of free meals in some schools.
- b) note the proposed action to increase the uptake of meals.
- c) request a future report on the success of these initiatives.

Michael O'Neill

Members wishing further information on this report should contact:
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NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL: EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Uptake of free school meals

Report by the Director of Education

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At its meeting on 15th March, the education resources sub-committee considered the comparative take up of free meals across schools (Appendix 1).

In order to improve the uptake numbers of both free and paid meals the education department and community services department will be taking appropriate action

2. UPTAKE OF MEALS

- 2.1 The most recent performance review for the school catering contract indicates that the number of children entitled to free meals has reduced by 11% in 2000/2001 compared to 1999/2000. However, the decrease in free meals uptake was 6% only in the same period.
- 2.2 In general, the uptake of paid school meals has increased by 5% in primaries and by 12% in secondaries. Overall the increase in paid meals is 9%.

3. SCHOOL SURVEYS

- 3.1 Following sub-committee discussion surveys were carried out to establish:-
- a) the factors affecting uptake.
 - b) action which could be taken to improve the uptake.
 - c) examples of good practice or initiatives taken at schools which could be applied more generally to increase free meals uptake.
- 3.2 The small survey sampled by catering services covered 12 primary schools and 6 secondary schools. It considered four specific issues:-
- a) the level of uptake.
 - b) the arrangements for pupils during lunch breaks.
 - c) the method of distribution of tickets for free meals within the school.
 - d) other factors which were considered to affect uptake
- 3.3.1 The following conclusions were made
- a) high uptake was associated to ticket distribution which did not draw attention to pupils receiving free meals

- b) high uptake was associated with few offsite alternatives to school meals being available.
- c) in high uptake primaries children tended to stay within the school campus during lunch breaks.
- d) low uptake was associated with large numbers bringing packed lunches.

3.4 An education survey asked schools to identify:-

- a) factors which the school considered influenced the uptake of free meals.
- b) action which could be taken to improve this.
- c) examples of good practice, which might be more widely implemented.

3.5 To date 84 primaries and 14 secondaries have responded. The findings are similar to those highlighted by Community Services. The factors reported to be associated with low uptake are the following :

- i) public methods of ticket distribution
- ii) poor choice and small portion sizes
- iii) low quality of food when brought in from other establishments
- iv) unattractive dining room surroundings
- v) pressure of local competition
- vi) high incidence of packed lunches

3.6 Head teachers made the following suggestions for improving uptake :

- a) greater use of food theme days.
- b) improving speed of service and ensuring variety is available to all pupils .
- c) involving parents and pupils in menu setting.
- d) improved dining surroundings.
- e) raising parents and pupil awareness of the benefits of school meals.

4. RECOMMENDATION

The education resources sub-committee is recommended to:-

- a) note the reasons cited for the low uptake of free meals in some schools.
- b) note the proposed action to increase the uptake of meals.
- c) request a future report on the success of these initiatives.

Michael O'Neil

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL- DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

UPTAKE OF FREE MEALS - 23 JANUARY 2001

School name	Number of pupils					
	On Register	On Register and entitled to free meals	Present and taking free meals	Uptake of Free Meals %	Number of pupils entitled but not taking meals	% not taking free meals
Brannock High School	727	132	120	91%	12	9%
Chryston High School	760	140	103	74%	37	26%
Caldervale High School	859	187	130	70%	57	30%
Airdrie Academy	1096	260	180	69%	80	31%
Taylor High School	791	185	125	68%	60	32%
St Maurice's High School	1060	164	110	67%	54	33%
Greenfaulds High School	860	94	63	67%	31	33%
Dalziel High School	957	118	79	67%	39	33%
Our Lady's High School, Cumbernauld	835	126	83	66%	43	34%
Columba High School	671	182	118	65%	64	35%
St Margaret's High School	1228	287	185	64%	102	36%
Kilsyth Academy	764	87	56	64%	31	36%
St Ambrose High School	1264	196	123	63%	73	37%
Cardinal Newman High School	1117	287	179	62%	108	38%
Clyde Valley High School	855	223	125	56%	98	44%
Braidhurst High School	485	192	104	54%	88	46%
Abronhill High School	562	98	52	53%	46	47%
Cumbernauld High School	824	177	88	50%	89	50%
Rosehall High School	432	117	58	50%	59	50%
Our Lady's High School, Motherwell	591	118	58	49%	60	51%
St Aidan's High School	1332	203	99	49%	104	51%
Coatbridge High School	761	170	81	48%	89	52%
Calderhead High School	628	122	57	47%	65	53%
Coltness High School	811	119	51	43%	68	57%
St Patrick's High School	847	263	94	36%	169	64%
Bellshill Academy	702	153	52	34%	101	66%
Totals	21819	4400	2573	58%	1827	42%

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL- DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

UPTAKE OF FREE MEALS - 23 JANUARY 2001

School name	Number of pupils					
	On Register	On Register and entitled to free meals	Present and taking free meals	Uptake of Free Meals %	Number of pupils entitled but not taking meals	% not taking free meals
Calderbank Primary School	59	20	20	100%	0	0%
Gartcosh Primary School	83	9	9	100%	0	0%
Glenboig Primary School	77	27	27	100%	0	0%
Greengairs Primary School	124	16	16	100%	0	0%
Morningside Primary School	105	9	9	100%	0	0%
Overtown Primary School	187	17	17	100%	0	0%
Sikeside Primary School	116	61	61	100%	0	0%
St Mary's Primary School, Cleland	145	29	29	100%	0	0%
St Brigid's Primary School	182	52	51	98%	1	2%
Kilsyth Primary School	238	73	71	97%	2	3%
St Francis Of Assisi Primary School	177	30	29	97%	1	3%
Keir Hardie Mem Primary	180	52	50	96%	2	4%
Albert Primary School	134	46	44	96%	2	4%
Allanton Primary School	132	23	22	96%	1	4%
Corpus Christi Primary School	93	22	21	95%	1	5%
Bargeddie Primary School	117	31	29	94%	2	6%
Coltness Primary School	189	55	51	93%	4	7%
Greenhill Primary School	197	41	38	93%	3	7%
St Edward's Primary School	256	54	50	93%	4	7%
St Mary's Primary School, Cumbernauld	283	23	21	91%	2	9%
Chryston Primary School	204	33	30	91%	3	9%
St Michael's Primary School	306	54	49	91%	5	9%
Alexandra Primary School	313	53	48	91%	5	9%
Cleland Primary School	134	31	28	90%	3	10%
St Barbara's Primary School	172	31	28	90%	3	10%
Banton Primary School	64	10	9	90%	1	10%
Old Monkland Primary School	149	65	58	89%	7	11%
St Joseph's Primary School, Cardowan	195	27	24	89%	3	11%
Castlehill Primary School	119	70	62	89%	8	11%
St Patrick's Primary School, Coatbridge	400	70	62	89%	8	11%
Glengowan Primary School	109	25	22	88%	3	12%
St Columba's Primary School	285	90	79	88%	11	12%
Kildrum Primary School	342	72	63	88%	9	13%
Tollbrae Primary School	345	62	54	87%	8	13%
Belvidere Primary School	142	60	52	87%	8	13%
St Stephen's Primary School	175	65	56	86%	9	14%
St Andrew's Primary School	228	77	66	86%	11	14%
Townhead Primary School	97	34	29	85%	5	15%
Rochsolloch Primary School	232	39	33	85%	6	15%
St Ignatius' Primary School	181	32	27	84%	5	16%
Knowetop Primary School	511	43	36	84%	7	16%
St Mary's Primary School, Whifflet	249	49	41	84%	8	16%
Stepps Primary School	308	36	30	83%	6	17%
Gartsherrie Primary School	224	58	48	83%	10	17%
St Mary's Primary School, Caldercruix	87	17	14	82%	3	18%
Ravenswood Primary School	322	45	37	82%	8	18%
Muirhouse Primary School	161	56	46	82%	10	18%
Sacred Heart Primary School, Bellshill	317	112	92	82%	20	18%
St James' Primary School	141	56	46	82%	10	18%

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Abronhill Primary School	349	78	64	82%	14	18%
Christ The King Primary	185	44	36	82%	8	18%
Eastfield Primary School	410	33	27	82%	6	18%
St Patrick's Primary School, Shotts	273	49	40	82%	9	18%
Langloan Primary School	242	27	22	81%	5	19%
St Bartholomew's Primary School	230	64	52	81%	12	19%
Glencairn Primary School	190	74	60	81%	14	19%
St Aloysius' Primary School	262	36	29	81%	7	19%
Logans Primary School	198	92	74	80%	18	20%
St Matthew's Primary School	187	92	74	80%	18	20%
Burnhead Primary School	193	86	69	80%	17	20%
Chapelside Primary School	239	116	93	80%	23	20%
Chapelgreen Primary School	72	15	12	80%	3	20%
St Teresa's Primary School	277	60	48	80%	12	20%
Glenmanor Primary School	284	63	50	79%	13	21%
Stane Primary School	143	43	34	79%	9	21%
St Gabriel's Primary School	137	62	49	79%	13	21%
St Margaret of Scotland Primary School	263	71	56	79%	15	21%
Petersburn Primary School	135	52	41	79%	11	21%
St Bernard's Primary School	161	47	37	79%	10	21%
Dunrobin Primary School	298	88	69	78%	19	22%
Netherton Primary School	136	23	18	78%	5	22%
Dykehead Primary School	336	105	82	78%	23	22%
Kirkshaws Primary School	186	54	42	78%	12	22%
Westfield Primary School	223	45	35	78%	10	22%
Carbrain Primary School	257	112	87	78%	25	22%
St Lucy's Primary School	213	35	27	77%	8	23%
Our Lady & St Francis Primary School	172	52	40	77%	12	23%
Cathedral Primary School	432	94	72	77%	22	23%
St Gerard's Primary School	198	34	26	76%	8	24%
St Serf's Primary School	245	87	66	76%	21	24%
St Monica's Primary School	304	98	74	76%	24	24%
Holy Cross Primary School	258	57	43	75%	14	25%
Newmains Primary School	291	97	73	75%	24	25%
Aitkenhead Primary School	208	8	6	75%	2	25%
Berryhill Primary School	180	104	78	75%	26	25%
Newarthill Primary School	170	28	21	75%	7	25%
Thornlie Primary School	175	71	53	75%	18	25%
Lawmuir Primary School	469	129	96	74%	33	26%
Holy Family Primary School	243	37	27	73%	10	27%
St Brendan's Primary School	177	37	27	73%	10	27%
St Patrick's Primary School, Kilsyth	331	59	43	73%	16	27%
Wishaw Academy Primary School	314	87	63	72%	24	28%
Plains Primary School	86	25	18	72%	7	28%
Condorrat Primary School	253	32	23	72%	9	28%
Ladywell Primary School	282	42	30	71%	12	29%
Tannochside Primary School	331	73	52	71%	21	29%
Alexander Peden Primary	271	90	64	71%	26	29%
St Patrick's Primary School, New Stevenston	164	48	34	71%	14	29%

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Mossend Primary School	347	106	75	71%	31	29%
Cumbernauld Primary School	446	54	38	70%	16	30%
Whitelees Primary School	406	67	47	70%	20	30%
Carnbroe Primary School	197	10	7	70%	3	30%
Golfhill Primary School	208	33	23	70%	10	30%
St Bernadette's Primary	224	69	48	70%	21	30%
Kirk O'shotts Primary School	80	26	18	69%	8	31%
St Dominic's Primary School	152	55	38	69%	17	31%
Calder Primary School	250	93	64	69%	29	31%
Noble Primary School	295	64	44	69%	20	31%
St Timothy's Primary School	258	71	48	68%	23	32%
Woodlands Primary School	293	61	41	67%	20	33%
New Monkland Primary School	181	18	12	67%	6	33%
St Thomas' Primary School	255	51	34	67%	17	33%
Our Lady & St Joseph's Primary School	109	29	19	66%	10	34%
Holytown Primary School	290	52	34	65%	18	35%
Balmalloch Primary School	285	46	30	65%	16	35%
Clarkston Primary School	357	69	45	65%	24	35%
Lammermoor Primary School	215	23	15	65%	8	35%
New Stevenston Primary School	213	46	30	65%	16	35%
Muir Street Primary School	212	100	65	65%	35	35%
St David's Primary School	205	65	42	65%	23	35%
St Helen's Primary School	307	27	17	63%	10	37%
Victoria Primary School	209	62	39	63%	23	37%
St Kevin's Primary School	113	29	18	62%	11	38%
Baird Memorial Primary School	181	5	3	60%	2	40%
Cambusnethan Primary School	286	36	21	58%	15	42%
Chapelhall Primary School	211	45	26	58%	19	42%
Shawhead Primary School	134	52	30	58%	22	42%
St Aidan's Primary School	337	38	21	55%	17	45%
St Augustine's Primary School	455	81	43	53%	38	47%
Auchinloch Primary School	61	5	1	20%	4	80%
Totals	28991	6805	5326	78%	1479	22%