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By Ed Leahy

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Calls to reinstate school fruit and veg scheme



New petition urges government to bring back dropped School Fruit and Vegetables Scheme

A petition has been launched demanding the government “urgently” reinstates the School Fruit and Vegetables Scheme, after it was suspended due to waste concerns during coronavirus closures.

Parents of children at Bath's Moorlands Infant School said the government has “without notice” stopped providing crucial fruit and veg supplies to Reception and Year One pupils.

The government scheme provides free fruit and vegetables to two million children from 16,000 state schools across the country.

The school's Parent Teacher Association decided to step in and continue funding the provision of fruit and veg in the meantime.

According to Somerset Live, Hannah Cameron McKenna, mother of Moorlands pupil Marlow, said: “It feels like taking away the free fruit for these children just hits the most disadvantaged the hardest.

“For some, this might be the first thing they eat in the morning and the only fruit they eat in a day. The government is failing these children.

“I was also shocked that the scheme had been suspended so quietly, and I'm concerned if we don't get it reinstated quickly, it could disappear altogether. We've had no reassurance that this isn't the case.”

A petition has since been launched on [Change.org](https://www.change.org) in a bid to overturn the government decision.

“I would like the Government to urgently re-instate the provision of free “School Fruit and Vegetables Scheme” (SFVS) to Key Stage 1 children in the UK. This NHS driven scheme has been indefinitely withdrawn by the Government without notice, affecting more than 2 million children in around 16,000 English schools,” the petition states.

“There are many children in poverty

across the UK, and many more who are in a constant state of food insecurity. Please do not fail these children now when many more families are at risk of falling further into poverty due to the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic. Urgently reinstate the SFVS as one of the most enduring strategies in public health preventative measures.”

Anger at the removal of the scheme comes after the government u-turned on its decision to stop free school meals, following a campaign by Manchester United striker Marcus Rashford.

A government spokesperson said: “The School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme has been paused so as little fresh produce goes to waste as possible while we work to bring more children back to school.

“Funding which would have been spent on the scheme is being used to support the NHS and other priorities during the pandemic.”

<http://www.fruitnet.com/americafruit/article/1474/parts-of-san-diego-quarantined-as-psyllid-count-mounts>

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