

No hot meals for six months at Trinity Primary School

Edinburgh primary pupils have gone without hot meals for six months while their school kitchen is revamped, it has emerged, after the discovery of asbestos caused huge delays.

Cllr Sanne Dijkstra-Downie said youngsters at Trinity Primary School are “fed up of eating the same sandwich lunch for months on end,” adding some children “have stopped eating school lunches altogether”.

The City of Edinburgh Council confirmed hot lunches will resume for pupils next month with a “large welcome back party” planned.

It also said use of a mobile kitchen unit will be considered if a similar situation arises in future.

Work to upgrade the Newhaven Road school’s canteen began earlier this year, with the provision of cooked meals stopping on 25 April according to Cllr Dijkstra-Downie.

Originally due to be completed in August, the council said delays ensued when “previously unknown” issues were revealed as works began.

These included the discovery of asbestos and a “defective roof structure” which increased the project’s timescale significantly.

But despite the emergence of complications, council officials took no action to ensure hot lunches could still be provided – and now pupils have gone more than six months without them.

“I’m really concerned that these pupils have missed out on warm and nutritious school lunches for so many months,” said Cllr Dijsktra-Downie, who represents Forth on the city council.

“We know that for many families, nutritious school lunches are vitally important, especially in the current cost of living crisis.

“Pupils are completely fed up of eating the same sandwich lunch for months on end and despite the school’s best efforts, some children have stopped eating school lunches altogether which is of course deeply concerning.”

The Lib Dem councillor has asked the education convener to provide “enhanced lunches” if there are further delays.

She added: “In the future, the council needs to make sure that it can provide warm lunches using a mobile kitchen so that pupils don’t miss out for long periods of time.”

A council spokesperson said: “While no other schools are facing similar delays, going forward, catering services are currently considering the use of a mobile kitchen unit to supply a limited hot service during larger projects should a similar situation arise in the future.

“Our team will continue to work incredibly hard to minimise any disruption this may cause. We will be working closely with the school to monitor the situation on a regular basis, with a large welcome back party planned once hot meals start again.”

by Donald Turvill, Local Democracy Reporter

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