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Mayor of Hackney
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Dear Parent and Carer,


Thank you and information on our Summer Activities and Support Programme

As we reach the end of another school year, we are writing this letter to thank you, once again, for your commitment to your childrens' education and their schools, as they have continued to adapt to changing circumstances. As we have moved out of the pandemic and the uncertain times it brought, your commitment and response has not gone unnoticed. Not to mention working with schools to respond to the very high temperatures we have recently been experiencing. Once again, the past year has been a testament to your dedication and resilience, as well as the work of school leaders and staff. Your ability to adapt and work alongside your childrens' schools has been an inspiration to us all. It has also been a pleasure finally to be able to visit so many schools and spend time with your children and see their fantastic achievements.

Of course, much of 2022 has rightly been shaped by the awful experience of Child Q and her family which continues to impact the Borough as a whole. From the start we have been clear that this should not have happened and led the Council's response to the recommendations and holding both the police and education system to account. We wrote to school leaders in June, highlighting our work to protect children, families and staff from racism and harm, where we said:

'The appalling treatment of Child Q, the Black schoolgirl strip searched by police in a Hackney school, has caused and continues to cause distress and trauma, to communities both in schools and out.

Hackney's schools and the local education system have great strengths of which you are a significant part. However the system continues to see injustices



disproportionately affecting children from Black and global majority backgrounds. These do not happen everywhere but they are too prevalent.

It's up to us working together to change this urgently. Your role as leaders of your staff and pupil community is pivotal to this: we want to collaborate with you and foster collaboration across Hackney and beyond in taking this work forward.'

If you would like to read the full letter, you can do so by clicking on the link [here](#). As part of our response, we have put in place a powerful set of actions that are being undertaken by the Council, better to protect residents from harm and racism, and you can read about these [here](#). We have also set up regular and recorded briefing sessions for parents and carers, the most recent of which took place this week, if you would like to know more please do get in touch.

We are also acutely aware of the severe strain many households in Hackney are under, as a result of the cost-of-living crisis. Everyday essentials, such as food and household bills, are rising faster than average incomes, driven by inflation and other forces outside the Council's control.

The Council as a whole is also dealing with significant financial challenges as a result of the pandemic and soaring inflation, with the cost of materials, wages and fuel adding millions of pounds to our outgoings. Despite this, we have made available a package of support - designed to help those most in need and who are facing the starkest of choices - that is more generous and targeted than ever before. For more information on how to apply, please see hackney.gov.uk/menu#additional-financial-help and [Council Tax Rebate](#).

Since April we have been distributing £2.8m of government funds to support households with food, energy and water bills; as well as a further £193k to help people struggling to pay their energy bills. This includes summer holiday meal vouchers for children on free school meals or those identified by community partners; a package of support for pensioners; and funds for those in temporary accommodation, supported living or hotels - and people at risk of homelessness or homeless - to help with housing costs, bills and other costs.

We have distributed £6.7m to local households who qualified for the Council Tax Rebate as well as £191k to 'top-up' that rebate. We've also focused £553k on those experiencing difficulty meeting housing costs; an extra £150k to help people on low incomes struggling to pay their Council Tax; and another £150k for those in need of crisis support. For more information on how to apply, please see hackney.gov.uk/menu#additional-financial-help and [Council Tax Rebate](#). And we're helping eligible local businesses affected by the pandemic through a £10m rate relief package. Alongside this, the Council will run an application process so that businesses have an opportunity to make a claim for this support. Further details will be available [here](#).

With so many people finding things tough this year, we have developed the Hello Again, Hackney: Summer Festival. This brings together low-cost and free activities happening in Hackney - including discounted offers and events, which parents, children and young people can take advantage of thanks to Council funding - culminating in the spectacular Hackney Carnival in September. More information can be found here: lovehackney.uk.

I would encourage you too, to look out for this year's summer guide. The Council has worked with youth organisations to produce a programme of hundreds of free or low-cost activities - including sports, arts, drama, events in music, theatre and digital media, and much more - for young people of all age groups to take part in over the summer break. The guide will be going to schools, youth clubs and adventure playgrounds this month, and will also be online soon, via this link: [Latest - Young Hackney](#). Please also refer to [Holiday playschemes | Hackney Education](#) for information about the summer playschemes.

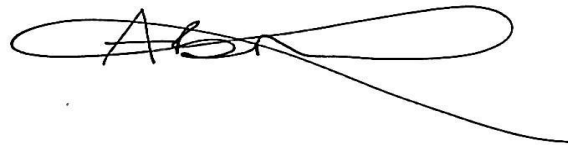
Looking to the future, it is the Council's intention to offer an improved back-to-school grant for families who need extra support. For those families with children starting their first year of secondary school, we will offer financial support to help cover the cost of new school uniforms. We will, of course, provide more information about this new support in due course.

With very best wishes for a peaceful and enjoyable summer break and if you are a family waiting for exam results over the summer or have children moving to secondary school or college best of luck.

Yours sincerely



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