



## **School meal price increase**

Dear Parent/Carer

Please be advised that from the start of September 2024 there will be a price increase to the cost of the main school meal. The current price is £2.44 for a main meal and a dessert. This will increase to £2.53.

The price rise is due to the continued pressure on the cost of wholesale food and fuel.

It should be noted that a school meal through ACE catering and our in-house teams still provides excellent value for money and we have kept the increase to a minimum in order to support the sustainability of our in-house meals service.

Our 'award winning' school meals continue to offer an exciting variety and choice, freshly prepared meals, cooked from scratch on site using local and seasonal ingredients that are healthy and nutritious.

All of our menus are developed in line with the nutritional standards set by the Schools Food Trust and the Government's Food Policy in Schools. We exceed these standards complying also with Food for Life criteria and our sustainable school food charter.

Information can be found on our website.

I ask for your understanding at this time with these price increases and appreciate you supporting our in-house school meals service. Please be reminded that ALL reception, year 1 and 2 pupils are entitled to a Free meal and can be ordered in the usual way, a charge will not be applied. This can save families an average of £465 per child per year.

### **Polite reminder**

From September all school lunches will only be able to be ordered in advance using the parent pay ordering system. If you have not pre-ordered and your child doesn't have a lunch with them you will be contacted to ensure that either you have funds in your account so that we can place an order or you are welcome to bring one in from home.

The exception to this will be our new starters. Parents/carers will be given a Parentpay account once their child is enrolled with the school and you will be able to order online in the usual way moving forward. We do ask that you please sit with your child when ordering a meal so they are aware of what has been ordered.

If you feel your circumstances have changed please see below information to register for Free School Meals through the portal.

## **Free school meals**

All children in reception, year 1 and year 2 at state schools in England automatically get free school meals. However, parents and guardians are encouraged to apply for free school meals when they enrol their child in school, as this can help their child's school to attract additional '[pupil premium](#)' funding to support learning.

From Year 3 onwards, children whose parents are getting any of the following are entitled to free school meals:

- Universal Credit (provided you have an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400, as assessed by earnings from up to three of your most recent assessment periods).
- Income Support (IS).
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance (IBSJA).
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (IRESA).
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit.
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, that does not exceed £16,190).
- Working Tax Credit run-on (the payment you get for a further 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit).

Children who receive a qualifying benefit in their own right can also get free school meals.

### How to apply

Apply through the [Citizen Portal](#). This is the quickest and easiest way to apply and will result in you getting an instant decision. Alternatively, call the Education Helpline on 0345 155 1019.

Please note that from 1 April 2018, all children currently getting free school meals will continue to do so while Universal Credit is rolled out. This will apply even if their parents' earnings rise above the new threshold during that time. In addition, any child who becomes eligible for free school meals after 1 April 2018 will be protected against losing these during the Universal Credit rollout period.

Once Universal Credit is fully rolled out, any existing claimants that no longer meet the eligibility criteria at that point (because their earnings are above the threshold or are no longer a recipient of Universal Credit) will continue to receive free school meals until the end of their current phase of education (such as primary or secondary).