



Headteacher: Mr H J Gilmore

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Dear Parents and Carers,

Further to our recent communications with you regarding the school canteen, I wanted to write and address a common query around the rationale behind the changes (thank you to several parents / carers who have contacted me to ask that question). Firstly, to be clear, the school is not profiting from the new arrangement to purchase catering supplies from the company, Apetito. The changes are in place for a number of reasons, which I outline below:

- **Compliance with DfE Guidance and Nutritional Standards:** We are now fully aligning our menu with the latest [Department for Education \(DfE\) nutritional guidelines](#). This commitment involves using higher-grade ingredients, increasing the provision of fresh fruit and vegetables, and ensuring meals meet specific nutrient criteria, all of which unfortunately incur a higher procurement cost.
- **Greater Transparency for Ingredients and Allergies:** We are prioritising absolute clarity and safety regarding ingredients for allergies. This means ensuring that parents / carers are aware of what their child is eating ahead of that day's lunch and are able to access nutritional data by scanning the bar code on the menu.
- **Sustainability Requirements:** In line with the government's [Sustainability and climate change strategy - GOV.UK](#) for schools, we are working with a provider who won the King's Award for enterprise in sustainable development 2024. Again, this does come at a premium compared to mass-market sourcing, which was the previous arrangement (we did not work with a single catering company).
- **Health and Nutrition:** Many parents / carers and staff have expressed concern about what the children are choosing to eat at lunchtime. Despite numerous options such as a salad bar and fresh sandwiches, many children were choosing to eat food with little nutritional value on a daily basis. As a school, we have a moral obligation to provide a healthy meal option for our children.

To deliver this enhanced service, we have had to make a necessary price adjustment to our canteen meals as attempting to meet the above goals inherently carries a higher cost than previous procurement methods. Alongside this, we are dealing with inflation levels which are affecting the catering sector across food, energy and supply chain costs.

The cost of a standard hot meal is £3.50 and a dessert is £1.15, or £4.50 if purchased together. We have lowered this from the initial price point of £5 having taken on board parent / carer feedback about the current cost of living, though it means that there is a risk of the school incurring a loss as a result. The new menu is available to view on the school website [here](#).

We remain dedicated to supporting lower income families and eligible students will continue to receive Free School Meals under the existing criteria, in addition to the Breakfast Club.

We will continue to use student feedback and purchasing data to review and refine the menu to suit the tastes of the students, whilst remaining committed to providing a healthier meal option for our students.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'H. Gilmore'.

H J Gilmore
Headteacher