

Parents and Carers
Primary Schools

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Date: 19 September 2023

Reference: 0203 - BP

Your Reference:

Dear Parent/Carer

SCHOOL MEAL PRICE – TERM 2 (AUTUMN 2023)

CATER^{ed}, the school lunch provider at your child's school is a cooperative trading company owned by the schools (your child's school) and the council. CATER^{ed} was set up to make sure that all schools (as shareholders) can provide great tasting school dinners and also to ensure that budgets for school food were spent on school food without impacting on others areas of school funding.

In your child's school, over 80% of our meals are cooked from scratch each and every day in kitchen using locally sourced, seasonal and fresh ingredients.

However, the current economic situation continues to create difficult operating conditions which affect all areas of our day to day lives both in school and at home. While inflation appears to be slowing we are still having to deal with further food and ingredient price increases of an average 10% from October.

Although this is down from the eye-wateringly high figures of over 20% we saw earlier this year, as we can all see from our own weekly shop at the supermarket this is still month on month increases in staple goods – it just means that the prices are rising less quickly.

Coupled with the continued shortages of some ingredients, menu planning and the control of food costs is ever more difficult.

So, regrettably and after much discussion, Boards of both the Plymouth Schools Shareholding Company (PSSC) Ltd and CATER^{ed} have had to take the very difficult decision to increase the price of a school meal. With effect from the start of the Term 2 this autumn, **Monday 30 October 2023**, the selling price of the hot, two-course school meal will be £2.80 for junior aged pupils in primary schools.

We have also taken the decision to extend the current menu until the end of term at Christmas and a new menu will launch in January 2024.

We are proud to have ensured that our staff, who come from our local communities, continue to be paid the full accredited UK Living Wage as they prepare and serve up to 11,000 meals every day to make sure children get the fuel they need to perform well at school.

Because we know that any increase in costs hits the disposable income of families, the Board have been working hard to avoid having to take this decision.

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Despite this increase, we believe our school meal prices remain really good value for money, providing great tasting food for local families whilst supporting local employment and the local economy.

We hope that those families who pay for their child's school lunch will understand and continue to support the service that we know offers fantastic choice, great value and helps children be ready to learn.

UNIVERSAL INFANT FREE SCHOOL MEALS

Pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are entitled to a free **universal infant free school** meal and other pupils may be entitled to a free school meal based on household income.

We encourage everyone to please take up this free offer.

FREE SCHOOL MEALS

If you think your child may be entitled to a free school meal, please talk directly to your school or visit

<http://web.plymouth.gov.uk/homepage/catered/cateredfreeschoolmeals.htm>.

If you have any questions about completing the forms, your child's school will be able to help you or call the Free School Meals Team on (01752) 307410 or email them fsm@plymouth.gov.uk for more information.

Registering for free school meals also helps your child's school with additional funding of £1,455 each year through the Pupil Premium which will be used to support education and learning.

We encourage everyone to check their eligibility and please take up this free offer.

ALLERGIES

If you have any questions about your child school meals and the menu, please contact us at catering@catered.org.uk particularly if your child has any allergies.

If you let us know what school your child attends so we can talk through the menu offer currently at that school and provide a full allergen breakdown.

We understand that these are difficult times and thank you for your continued support.



Brad Pearce
Managing Director on behalf of
Plymouth Schools Shareholding Company (PSSC) Ltd,
and; CATER^{ed} Limited