

Dear Parent / Guardian

Our aim as a school food provider is to deliver great food at affordable prices for our students and parents. The cost-of-living crisis continues which we are all experiencing in our own lives, with prices in supermarkets and other daily costs rising almost weekly. This has in turn impacted the prices we pay for food and the wages we pay our teams. I wanted to write to you to let you know what we are doing to try to limit the impact on students and parents.

There are two issues which the food industry is needing to deal with:

1. Food inflation at 16%
2. Staff wage increases 9.7%

Food inflation

This is predominantly driven by the war in Ukraine, which is not only a terrible humanitarian crisis, but has also significantly damaged economies across the globe and has had a real impact on food availability. The food supply volumes have dropped and driven prices up. The latest food inflation figures reported, show a 16% increase in the cost of the food we buy.

Staff wage increases

The Government has increased the minimum wage by 9.7%. This is a positive move that will mean our teams are better able to address the cost pressures they are under and it helps us to recruit and retain staff. This is more than 3% higher than last year's record rise, so great progress, but clearly creates its own challenge from a funding perspective.

To address these cost increases we must raise the prices we charge in our school canteens. We have looked at all options to minimize the increases such as changes to suppliers and adding some new product lines. But we must not allow these pressures to impact the quality of the food, nor the portion sizes we provide. We have also absorbed some of the cost increases, however we will be implementing an average tariff increase of 4.1% from April 2023. We have worked hard with Anglian Learning to freeze the cost of a number of healthier items including fruit and salads and the price of our main meal of the day remains frozen at £2.50. Whilst this is never going to be good news, we hope you will agree that it is a significantly lower than the headline figures above.

As always, we will continue to encourage open and honest dialogue with clients, students and parental groups to ensure we have a joined-up approach during this challenging period. We have a difficult twelve to eighteen months to navigate through, but I personally give you my commitment to continue to serve food of the highest quality, that represents good value for our students, parents, and schools.

Kindest regards

Ken Navin

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