

Dear Parent/Carer,

We would like to take this opportunity to let you know of changes taking place to the school's catering provision.

We are all aware of the current economic challenges that we have to manage on a day-to-day basis, particularly in respect of food and hospitality price increases. We all rarely visit the supermarket without noting one or several items bought in the previous few weeks, that has yet again risen in price or the contents of the package reduced in size.

Educaterers as the school's caterer, are no different and over the past 12 months they have absorbed numerous increases in the cost of staffing and raw materials. It is anticipated that the National Minimum wage will increase in April 2024 by 7.2% and in October 2023 food and non-alcoholic beverage price inflation finally cooled to 10.1% having peaked in March 2023 at 19.2%.

Whilst we have done everything, we can to mitigate these increasing costs, we are always aware of the importance of offering your Children a selection of nutritious, appetising meal choices at an affordable price.

From January 2024 there will be an increase to Educaterers selling prices. We have focused some of the lowest increases on the healthier items, and ensured that the meal deals have increased by less than 4% or 10 pence so that students can still have a two-course meal for £2.60, we as a school can no longer subsidise the food costs to keep the prices at the current level and if we as a school keep subsidising these costs, it will undoubtedly affect resources for children in other areas.

For this reason, the governing board have agreed to change the price from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

The updated price list will be available on the school website, and there are various options available within the different pricing brackets to ensure your child has options to fit all budgets.

Recent national surveys based on the dietary quality of school meals and packed lunches concluded that the cost of packed lunches have risen by 70% in a year, and that children consuming school meals were more likely to meet minimum recommendations for vegetables, protein rich foods, and fibre, and not exceed maximum recommendations for salt and sweet snacks by having school meals. Our price increase is equivalent to an 4% increase.

Increasing prices is always a tough decision, but one we could ultimately not hold back any longer. We hope that parents/carers will be reassured by the fact this will not affect free school meal provision.

You will still be able to order your child's lunch on the parent pay app, and if you add money to your account, your child will be able to choose their meal on the day, if that is a more suitable preference for you.

Yours sincerely



Mrs J Shulman  
South Staffordshire Learning Partnership  
Chair of Governors