



## Frequently Asked Questions

### **My child hasn't had school meals before, how do I pay for them?**

If your child is in KS1 the Government introduced free school meals for all children in the UK in reception and years 1 and 2 in 2014. This means that any child in these year groups are entitled to a delicious hot meal. If you require more information, please contact Chartwells: 01435 865310.

If your child is in KS2 you can pay for their school meals by online payment if your school uses ParentPay or cash on the day. Pupils across all years may be entitled to receive Free School Meals if parents are in receipt of financial support, please contact your school to find out more.

### **I want my child to start having school meals, where can I find the menu?**

Our menus are displayed on the board in the schools reception, and we will also send menu flyers home in children's book bags. Additionally, you can log onto our Love School Meals website: <http://loveschoolmeals.co.uk/east-sussex/>

### **I want my child to start having school meals, do I need to pre-order or does my child choose at school?**

If your school uses ParentPay you will need to pre-order your child's school meal. To order your child's school meals please go to [www.parentpay.co.uk](http://www.parentpay.co.uk). Alternatively children are able to choose their meal in the morning for that lunchtime.

### **What is included in a school meal?**

Each school meal consists of a protein item (either meat, fish or vegetarian options), 2 vegetables (e.g. broccoli/ sweetcorn/ carrots), a starchy carbohydrate (e.g. pasta/ rice/ potato), and a pudding. There is also a salad bar available daily for children to help themselves to, and water and milk on offer for a drink option. If your child does not want the pudding option, fruit and yoghurt are available daily.



## **Frequently Asked Questions cont.**

**I am not sure that my child will enjoy the hot lunch option. Are there any alternatives that my child could choose from instead?**

We realise that not all children will want a full hot meal at lunchtime. Therefore there are daily options of jacket potatoes with a variety of fillings that your child could choose from instead. Please see your child's school menu for more detail.

**Will my child be able to switch between having a homemade packed lunch and a school meal?**

Yes. As school meals are not mandatory, you are able to switch between packed lunches and school meals. Remember though that school meals are free to those children in reception and years 1 & 2, and provide a nutritionally balanced, delicious meal.

**I want my child to be able to have school meals but they have an allergy/ require a special diet. Do you cater for special diets?**

Yes. Our dedicated team of nutritionists work with our chef teams to create menus for those children that suffer with allergies or require a special diet. A special diet is a requirement different to the choices offered within the menu cycle, which are medically required or due to religious beliefs. For medically required diets all special diet request are required to be supported with a GP / Dieticians letter confirming the allergy.

The Chartwells nutrition team develop four core special diet menus that are released with every new central menu cycle. This includes non-gluten containing, milk, egg, and nut free menus. For pupils requiring multi allergy menus these are created on a case by case basis.

Please note that for safety reasons Chartwells can only provide a special diet menu for any of the 14 EU allergens, this includes:

- Cereals containing gluten
- Milk and milk derivatives
- Egg
- Nuts
- Peanuts
- Lupin
- Soya
- Fish
- Molluscs



## Frequently Asked Questions cont.

- Crustaceans
- Celery
- Sesame seeds
- Mustard
- Sulphur dioxide and sulphites at concentrations of more than 10mg/kg or 10mg/litre expressed as SO<sub>2</sub>

Once a special diet menu is devised it will then be sent to parent/ guardian for written consent, only when authorised by the parent/ guardian will any food be given to the child.

### **I want to know more about how school meals are prepared. Are the meals cooked on site and do they use fresh ingredients?**

All meals are freshly cooked every day in East Sussex schools, we are also proud to hold the Bronze Food for Life Catering Mark which shows that school food is healthy and uses seasonal ingredients that are at least 75% freshly prepared.

### **My child is nervous about eating in the dining hall. I want to be able to reassure them by talking them through the dining hall experience. How does the dining hall work and who will my child be sitting with?**

Whilst the dining hall may be a daunting place for a new starter – there is nothing to be worried about! Children eat with their class mates, and are led in to the dining hall by year group, and supervised by their teachers (who will also supervise them in making sure they get their meals and take it to their tables).

### **My child doesn't like to rush eating their food, how long will they have to eat their lunch?**

Lunchtime periods vary from school to school, most allow at least 20 minutes to enjoy their lunchtime experience.



## **Frequently Asked Questions cont.**

**I want to make sure that my child is eating their school lunches. How do I find out how much of the school meal my child is eating at lunch time?**

In East Sussex, midday supervisory staff are available to monitor, help and encourage your child to eat their school meal and try new foods.

**My child is very particular about what they eat. Will my child be able to get a school meal they like?**

Menus are available to parents to talk about daily food choices. In all of our schools there is the option of a jacket potato if your child doesn't like either of the main meal options. We also offer fresh fruit and yoghurt as a pudding alternative. Our staff soon understand the likes and dislikes of pupils and help them make choices on a daily basis.

Our local research shows that children will often try new foods when their friends are eating, this often leads to pupils enjoying more foods leading to a wider and more varied diet. We also can offer taster pots for pupils to encourage them to try something new.