

Parents and Carers
Primary Schools

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Date: 15 March 2023

Reference: 0189 - BP

Your Reference:

Dear Parent/Carer

SCHOOL MEAL PRICE – APRIL 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.

The current cost-of-living crisis is affecting all aspects of our daily lives and not least with inflation, and particularly around food prices as we have seen in our weekly shopping baskets.

The Government's published rate for food inflation in February 2023 was 16.7%. Over the past 12 months, we have seen exceptional increases in the cost of staple ingredients that we use on school menus increase by an incredible 50-70%.

We have also seen increases across all items we purchase, from cutlery to fridges and freezer to ovens of between 10-40%.

There are many factors causing these increases but some are the continued fall-out and recovery from the pandemic, the War in Ukraine (wheat and sunflower oil which affects food production for human consumption as a well as the cost of animal feed leading to increased meat prices), availability of fresh produce, avian flu, the drought last summer affecting quality and quantity of the harvests and increased utility costs affecting growers. Unfortunately, this uncertainty looks set to continue for the foreseeable future.

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 Summer Term, **Monday 17 April 2023**, the selling price of the hot, two-course school meal will be £2.60 for primary schools.

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 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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Page 2
School Meal Prices – April 2023
15 March 2023

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 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