



*The Federation of
Hackbridge Primary School and Spencer Nursery School*
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1st February 2022

Dear Parent/Carers

CHANGES TO SCHOOL DINNER MEAL PROVISION – IMPORTANT INFORMATION

We are writing to update you of some changes in relation to school dinner meals provision moving forwards:

1) Pre-selection of school dinner meal choices from the School Dinner Menu

Earlier during the pandemic, when we had to serve the children their meals in their classrooms as part of our risk assessment, we trialled parents pre-selecting their child's school dinner choice for each day. Since our return to serving the children in the hall in this academic year, we then reverted to the previous practice of the children choosing their meal as they come in to the hall to be served each day.

However, although Caterlink endeavour to ensure a choice is available for all pupils, we are aware of some occasions when a pupil has not been able to have the meal that they would have liked because it has been very popular.

To avoid this happening in the future and to ensure that all pupils can be served the choice of meal which is their preference, we have agreed with Caterlink that starting from after half-term, 22nd February 2022, we will operate a system where parents have pre-chosen the meal for their child from the available three-week menu. This will mean that the kitchen will know how many of each type of meal to prepare each day so that all children can have the pre-chosen choice that their parent has selected for them.

There is a new school dinner menu which will run from Tuesday 22nd February 2022 to Friday 1st April 2022. Tomato pasta is now alternated with a jacket potato as a third option each day (i.e. jacket potatoes are no longer an option every day – only where specified on the menu). A copy of the menu is attached to the email with this letter.

In order to make your child's daily school dinner meal choices for each day of the three-week menu, please complete the Google Form for your child at <https://forms.gle/vy5m3AjkKr5fjrhLA>

Please note that you need to fill in the form separately for each child at our school if you have more than one child who has school meals. **Responses must be received by TUESDAY 8TH FEBRUARY 2022 for all pupils who will be having school dinners after half-term.**

IF, AFTER THE 8TH FEBRUARY 2022, YOU WISH TO MAKE ANY FUTURE ADJUSTMENTS TO THE PRE-SELECTIONS THAT YOU HAVE MADE FOR YOUR CHILD'S MEAL CHOICES WITHIN THE HALF-TERM FOR ANY REASON, THEN YOU WILL NEED TO EMAIL THE SCHOOL OFFICE WITH THESE CHANGES SO THAT OUR MEALTIME SPREADSHEET CAN BE UPDATED ACCORINDGLY. VERBAL CHANGES WILL NOT BE ACTIONED.

2) School Dinner Menus from the Summer Term 2022 onwards

From 19th April 2022 onwards, Caterlink's school dinner menus will change twice yearly; in April and November each year meaning that pre-selection will only need to be made twice a year from that point forwards.

3) Special Diets – IMPORTANT UPDATE

A Special Diet is required where a pupil has a food allergy and/or intolerance which has been identified by a NHS professional, a GP/consultant or registered dietician.

Caterlink have recently updated their Special Diets processes and a new Special Diets procedure has been compiled.

In future, any new Special Diet requests must be made using the Caterlink Special Diet form and emailed by the school to the Caterlink Operations Manager for Sutton for their approval before the school dinner meals are planned and agreed with the parent/carer. **Any request made must be supported with up-to date written medical evidence from an NHS professional, a GP/consultant or registered dietician.**

For any child who currently receives a Special Diet, but where the school do not hold a copy of up-to-date medical evidence from an NHS professional, a GP/consultant or registered dietician, parents/carers need to provide this evidence as soon as possible and by Thursday 28th May 2022 at the latest. Beyond that date, Caterlink WILL NOT PROVIDE for any Special Diet for which we are unable to share written medical evidence.

It is crucial that parents/carers who have previously advised the school of any allergy or intolerance without providing medical evidence acts now to provide us with this. In some cases, pupils may have grown out of an allergy or intolerance, or it was never medically evidenced, and in those instances the pupil's record will be updated accordingly. A dislike for a particular food cannot be recorded as an allergy or intolerance.

Where parents/carers have provided medical evidence of a food allergy or intolerance from an NHS professional, a GP/consultant or registered dietician, Caterlink will then check the information using the [LACA](#) risk assessment tool. For a new notification, parents/carers are advised that the process can take up to three weeks before Caterlink are able to provide a special diet menu and until then the 'allergy option' will be provided if required. This will consist of a jacket potato with baked beans, vegetables and fresh fruit salad until a menu has been implemented, as long as the allergy does not include any of these foods.

In the very exceptional event of a Special Diet being deemed too high risk for Caterlink to safely provide a meal, the school will be informed and provided with full information as to the decision.

Please note Special Diet forms do not need to be completed for religious or lifestyle dietary choices; only for a medically required diet.



Changes to school meal patterns (i.e. school dinners or packed lunches)

As previously, you have the opportunity to change your child's school meal pattern from school dinners to packed lunches, or vice versa, at the start of each new term or half-term.

If you would like your child to be packed lunches for the next half-term, please send your child in with a packed lunch on Tuesday 22nd February 2022.

If you would like your child to have school dinners for the next half-term (22nd February – 1st April 2022), please do not send them in with a packed lunch.

For children who are in Years 3 – 6, please ensure that their ParentPay account is in credit **IN ADVANCE** at all times unless you have registered them for Free School Meals. If you are in any doubt about whether your

child is entitled to benefits-related Free School Meals, please complete the [London Borough of Sutton online form here](#) – it is a very simple process and may benefit you, your child and the school if you are eligible.

Children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are entitled to Universal infant Free School Meals, but you should still [apply for your benefits-related Free School Meals](#) if you are eligible as the government provide additional funds to the school for educational activities.

School Meals Debt Policy for Parents

Parents/carers who pay for their child's school dinners are politely reminded that the school operates a strict NO DEBT policy relating to the provision of school meals. This means that all money for school meals must be paid in advance.

If a parent genuinely forgets to pay in advance, the school may grant a debt allowance of up to three meals. However, this debt must be paid the next day and future meals must be paid for in advance before any meal is provided.

If the debt is not cleared, parents must either provide a packed lunch or take the child home for lunch. In a case when a debt payment is not received, nor a packed lunch provided, the school will phone the parent to ask them to provide a packed lunch before lunchtime or arrange to take their child home.

In the case of recurrent school meal debts, the school can withdraw the option of school meal availability for individual pupils and parents will have to provide a packed lunch.

The full policy can be found on the school website.

Yours sincerely



Mrs E Walford
Headteacher