**New Term – Schools Catering Update**

# Free P5 lunches

Since August 2021, we have been delivering free lunches to all P4s. In many of our schools, uptake is incredibly high (averaging 90%). The catering team have been working very hard to deliver an additional 2000-3000 meals per day across the city and our current estate is coping well with the increase.

P5 free lunches will start in January 2022 and we expect a continued increase in meal numbers (we forecast, initially around 80% of the P5 roll will take up the offer).

The Parentpay system will automatically be updated during the upcoming school holidays. The updated system will allow all Primary 5 pupils to be entitled to free school meals (in addition to P1-P4 pupils).

ANY meal bookings currently in the system for PRIMARY 5 PUPILS ONLY, will be REMOVED.

Following the system update, parents of **PRIMARY 5 PUPILS ONLY**, **SHOULD BOOK/REBOOK** **ANY MEAL CHOICES BETWEEN SATURDAY 1ST JANUARY AND WEDNESDAY 5th JANUARY 2022** (for meals to be taken from Monday 10th January)

Please note meals for Thursday 6th January and Friday 7th January **for PRIMARY 5 pupils only**, will be ordered by the Catering Team with support from school offices therefore parents of P5 pupils, will not be able to choose meals for these days. We will ensure there are enough food choices available for P5 pupils on these days.

P6/P7 are due to move to free school meals in August 2022. At this point we expect that our total meal capacity will double on numbers reported in 2018 to around 32,000 meals per day.

From August 2022, all special school pupils will also be entitled to a free school meal (inclusive of secondary special school provision)

**Additional Catering Information for P1-P7 Parents**

# Menus

January menus for P1 – P4, P6 and P7 are now live for parents to book on ParentPay.

Our new menus will launch after the Easter holidays. The catering department use pupil and parental surveys regularly to form the following years menu. A survey for April’s menu is now live -<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/foodsch21>

We will use this feedback to help us continually improve our offering.

Annually we re-work familiar foods to pupils to make them healthier and comply with the Scottish Governments school’s food standards, which are the most stringent of all UK countries. Items such as cod goujons, a pupil favourite, are non-flash fried and are oven baked at school. Our pizzas are specifically designed to include hidden vegetables and wholemeal bases. It is always such a challenge to design a menu that works for over 100 schools across Edinburgh and balancing pupils’ favourites with a continued shift towards healthier recipes.

Combined with the new school food regulations, over the last 5 years we have reduced sugar in our menus by 37%, salt by 44% and halved the saturated fat in recipes.

Our high school menus are now also fully compliant with the school meal standards and Natasha’s Law.

# Ongoing Supply Chain Issues

You may have noticed that some of our suppliers are experiencing product shortages or a lack of substitute products. We continue to work with procurement to mitigate supply chain disruptions, but it is likely that going into the new year we will see continued price increases and supply shortages, this may result in short notice menu changes at unit level.

# Special Diet Policy

A reminder of the special diet policy is attached with this memo. We have altered the special diet form to comply with GDPR regulations, a doctor’s note or signature must accompany a special diet form to ensure our cooks have accurate information and do not place pupils in un-due risk. We publish all our allergens online at:

<https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/food-clothing/lunch-menus-schools/1>For our new menu update we will update the website prior to the Easter break with the new information and include a copy of the special diet forms and information.

# Recruitment

Our service continues to operate in an extremely challenging labour market, all the team are working to increase our workforce by 25% by August 2022.

We continue looking for passionate, creative, adaptable, and hard-working individuals. If you have a positive attitude, wish to progress your career in stable employment, the council may be for you!

We have great succession planning with varying roles across our service and plenty of opportunity for you to grow within the council, not just in catering but in the 100 other services we provide.

Find out more -<https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/work-us/cook-jobs-catering-team/1> or e-mail Catering.Communications@edinburgh.gov.uk