



Highcliffe St. Mark Primary School & Fledglings Pre-School

A Church of England Foundation School

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Dear Parents and Carers,

Lunchtime Update

As some parents may be aware, this term we have reviewed our lunch processes and implemented some changes to improve the experience for our children, both in the halls and the playground.

As we have also changed lunch provider in the last year, I would like to take the opportunity to give some more information about their offering.

Lunchtimes

With over 600 pupils to serve each day, lunchtimes are busy and our staff work hard to keep the halls calm, organised and supportive. We aim to make it as positive and comfortable an experience as possible.

Children are asked to remain seated for a minimum of 15 minutes, with additional time provided for those who need it. This change followed staff observations that many pupils were rushing their meals in order to get outside quickly. Since introducing the new approach, we have seen less food waste and more children eating enough before going out to play. In KS2, eating times have always been staggered and will continue to rotate each half term, ensuring fairness so that no year group has the same slot consistently.

Supporting Pupils

We recognise that changes in routine can be especially challenging for neurodiverse pupils and those who rely on predictability. Please be reassured that no child's individual provision has been reduced or removed. For some pupils, the timing of their eating slot is the only change. Staff prepared pupils in advance using visual supports, structured walkthroughs, and adult guidance. We continue to offer reasonable adjustments, which may include quieter spaces, supported transitions, visual timetables and flexible entry where appropriate. If your child is finding the new arrangements difficult, please let us know so that we can review and adjust support promptly.

Playtime

All pupils continue to receive the same amount of playtime as before. We now spread year groups across different areas to avoid having all children on one playground at the same time, to keep playtime safe and improve the experience for the children.

Meal Quality and Menus

We are delighted to report that the number of meals ordered increased when we changed provider, and continue to be consistently higher across the school, reflecting the improved choice and quality of meals.

Our Children's Champions regularly review menus and share feedback directly with staff, which is used to shape future menu updates. We will repeat this process as we develop the next menu cycle.



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2023 - 2024



Goosemoor Educatering

Like schools nationally, we are managing the impact of rising food and operational costs. Despite this, Goosemoor Educatering remains committed to providing high-quality meals made from locally sourced ingredients. Their service focuses on *restaurant-quality, child-led, nutritionally balanced meals* within the constraints of school budgets.

Goosemoor review menus in response to pupil feedback and seasonal produce, and can adapt dishes to meet school preferences. They continue to supply high-quality ingredients, including produce from Devon and Cornwall, regional meats, and Red Tractor assured chicken. We will keep sharing feedback with Goosemoor and working with them to maintain high standards.

Meal Pre-Ordering

The two-week pre-order system was introduced on Goosemoor's recommendation and is used successfully in many other schools. It helps with effective meal planning, reduces waste and ensures we have enough fresh ingredients available for popular dishes.

Whilst pre-ordering is an important next step, we recognise that there may be exceptional circumstances when last minute changes are needed. In these unavoidable situations, please contact us as soon as possible.

To reassure parents, Arbor accounts are only charged once a meal has been taken. This means that if your child is absent, no money will be deducted from your account.

We recognise this is a change for families, so we will review the system after half a term, taking into account feedback from pupils, staff and parents.

We hope that you find this information useful. If you have any further questions or would like to discuss anything in more detail, please get in touch.

Yours truly,



Claire Barker
Headteacher