



ST. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY C OF E JUNIOR SCHOOL
“Realising the potential of every child within a caring, Christian community”

17th September 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

SCHOOL DINNER MENUS – AUTUMN TERM 2021

With the return to communal dining in the school hall this academic year it has been wonderful to see children eating, chatting and enjoying their time together at lunchtime. After spending so long in class ‘bubbles’ it is great to be able to share a meal with friends during the lunch break once again.

The new school dinner menus have now arrived and I have great pleasure in sending you the new details and information which will be on offer after the October half term. You will see we have returned to a 3-week rolling menu and a wider choice and range of food which we were not able to offer when the children were eating in their classrooms. The menus have been carefully chosen to ensure that old favourites remain but at the same time introducing some new recipes and combinations to ‘tickle your taste buds!’ As always I am indebted to our fantastic catering team led by Mrs Turner (Catering Manager) and our dedicated team of Midday Assistants who oversee this very busy period of the school day. I am sure you will join me in thanking them for their hard work, care and support.

The new menus will commence on **Tuesday 2nd November 2021.**

The menus are planned in consultation with the Local Authority School Meals Support Team, ensuring that each week’s menu meets the required national food standards. Allergen information is available from the School Office upon request.

Together with this letter you will receive **two copies** of the three-week menu plan – one for you to keep for your information and one to be returned to school, indicating your child’s menu choices for each day of the three-week cycle. As you will see, there is a delicious range of meals planned with a main option and a vegetarian option for each day. Please look at these menus with your children – there are lots of tasty dishes to discuss and try!

Please return **one** menu plan, marked to show whether your child wants the main or vegetarian option on each day. **If you do not return a menu plan, we will assume you are providing your child with their own packed lunch each day.** The following points should be considered when signing up for school dinners:

- School meals **must** be paid for via our online payments system ‘ParentPay’ (www.parentpay.com). **We no longer accept cash/cheque payments made through the School Office** and paying via ParentPay will greatly assist us in this. It is also easier for you to manage your payments.
- The cost of school dinners for 5 days is now **£11.75** (£2.35 per day) and we would encourage you to manage your payments through ParentPay so you are always in credit. The minimum payment on the ParentPay system is £11.75 but you are able to pay any amount you wish above this level. We cannot allow parents to fall into arrears and school meals must be paid for **before** they are taken.
- If you are entitled to Free School Meals (FSM) you will not need to pay via ParentPay and the school has a list of children currently in receipt of FSM. If you think you may be entitled to free school meals please read the entitlement information contained in this letter, visit the school website or speak to a member of the School Office staff.
- The new menus will begin on Tuesday 2nd November 2021 and continue on a 3 week rolling cycle. We will repeat your child’s menu choices unless you inform us otherwise **in writing**.



ST. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY C OF E JUNIOR SCHOOL
“Realising the potential of every child within a caring, Christian community”

In preparation for the start of these new menus, please ensure that your completed menu plan is returned to school by the morning of **Friday 24th September 2021** at the very latest, in order that we can place orders for the correct quantities of food.

If your child has particular allergies or dietary requirements we should be able to meet these. It may be advisable to speak to the Catering Manager (Mrs Turner) before signing up and an appointment to meet with her can be made via the School Office. I would like to point out that our kitchen is a nut free environment.

Criteria for free school meals (FSM) eligibility.

If you are able to prove that you are in receipt of the following benefits you may well be able to apply for free school meals.

To be eligible you must be receiving one of the following:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Child Tax Credit (not Working Tax Credit), with an annual income below £16,190
- Pension Guarantee Credit
- Employment and Support Allowance, income related
- Support under part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act, 1999
- Working Tax Credit run-on, paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit, with a household income of £7,400 or less (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

Applications for FSM must be made online. Further information as well as guidance on the application process can be found at www.essex.gov.uk/educationawards

If you are eligible for free school meals, and your circumstances change in any way (such as changing address or school, and registering another child) you will need to contact the Local Authority via educationawards@essex.gov.uk and advise them of these changes.

We are all very excited to be sharing these new menus with you and hope you and your children are looking forward to it too! Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Dean Moran
Headteacher