



Frequently Asked Questions

My child hasn't had school meals before, how do I pay for them?

If your child is in KS1 the Government introduced free school meals for all children in the UK in reception and years 1 and 2 in 2014. This means that any child in these year groups are entitled to a delicious hot meal or packed lunch for free. If you require more information, please contact the Contract Office on 01634 720585.

If your child is in KS2 you can pay for their school meals by cash or cheque, in a named envelope to your child's school.

Pupils across all years may be entitled to receive Free School Meals if parents are in receipt of financial support, please contact your school to find out more.

I want my child to start having school meals, where can I find the menu?

Our menus are often displayed on the board in the school's reception, and we will also send menu flyers home in children's book bags. Additionally, many schools have a copy on their websites, for your information.

I want my child to start having school meals, do I need to pre-order or does my child choose at school?

You do not need to pre-order your child's school meal. Children are able to choose their meal in the morning for that lunchtime.

What is included in a school meal?

Each school meal consists of a protein item (either meat, fish or vegetarian options), 2 vegetables (e.g. broccoli/ sweetcorn/ carrots), a starchy carbohydrate (e.g. pasta/ rice/ potato), and a pudding. There is also salad available daily for children to help themselves to, and water is always on offer for a drink option. If your child does not want the pudding option, fruit and yoghurt are available daily.



Frequently Asked Questions cont.

I am not sure that my child will enjoy the hot lunch option. Are there any alternatives that my child could choose from instead?

We realise that not all children will want a full hot meal at lunchtime. Therefore there are daily options of jacket potatoes with a variety of fillings & a range of sandwiches that your child could choose from instead. Please see your child's school menu for more detail.

Will my child be able to switch between having a homemade packed lunch and a school meal?

Yes. As school meals are not mandatory, you are able to switch between packed lunches and school meals. Remember though that school meals are free to those children in reception and years 1 & 2, and provide a nutritionally balanced, delicious meal.

I want my child to be able to have school meals but they have an allergy/ require a special diet. Do you cater for special diets?

Yes. Our dedicated team of nutritionists work with our chef teams to create menus for those children that suffer with allergies or require a special diet. A special diet is a requirement different to the choices offered within the menu cycle, which are medically required or due to religious beliefs. For medically required diets all special diet request are required to be supported with a GP / Dieticians letter confirming the allergy.

The Chartwells nutrition team develop four core special diet menus that are released with every new central menu cycle. This includes non-gluten containing, milk, egg, and nut free menus. For pupils requiring multi allergy menus these are created on a case by case basis.

Please note that for safety reasons Chartwells can only provide a special diet menu for any of the 14 EU allergens, this includes:

- Cereals containing gluten
- Milk and milk derivatives
- Egg, nuts, peanuts, Lupin, Soya, fish
- Molluscs
- Crustaceans
- Celery, Sesame seeds, Mustard
- Sulphur dioxide and sulphites at concentrations of more than 10mg/kg or 10mg/litre expressed as SO₂

Once a special diet menu is devised it will then be sent to parent/ guardian for written consent, only when authorised by the parent/ guardian will any food be given to the child.



Frequently Asked Questions cont.

I want to know more about how school meals are prepared. Are the meals cooked on site and do they use fresh ingredients?

Meals are freshly prepared and cooked on site daily. For further details about your child's school meals, please do call the contract office on 01634 720585.

My child is nervous about eating in the dining hall. I want to be able to reassure them by talking them through the dining hall experience. How does the dining hall work and who will my child be sitting with?

Whilst the dining hall may be a daunting place for a new starter – there is nothing to be worried about! Children eat with their class mates, and are led in to the dining hall by year group, and supervised by their teachers (who will also supervise them in making sure they get their meals and take it to their tables).

I want to make sure that my child is eating their school lunches. How do I find out how much of the school meal my child is eating at lunch time?

Chartwell's work in partnership with your child's school to ensure that children get a wholesome, nutritious meal each lunchtime. If you have any concerns, please do raise these with the school or your friendly kitchen staff.

My child is very particular about what they eat. Will my child be able to get a school meal they like? And what would happen if they do not like the meal they choose?

Reading and understanding the menu with your child will help them to make their meal choices each day. Our kitchen staff understand that this can be overwhelming for very young children, and will chat with your child should they be concerned over their choice. We never want to see a child hungry or upset, so will work with your child and the school to resolve any menu choice issues locally and immediately.