

Development Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services

Tony Hanson, Director
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29 June 2023



Dear Head Teacher

Notification of Primary School Meal Price Increase – September 2023

I wrote to you earlier in the year to advise you of the April 2023 price rise in school meals. This increase had been based on the annual food inflation figure published in December 2022 of 13.3% and following the settlement of the 2022/23 pay award for local government and non-teaching staff which saw an increase of more than 10% for the lowest grades.

I am sure you will appreciate that since then, food prices have continued to rise even further, the most recently published 12 month figure standing at 19.1% (April 2023, ONS). In addition to this pressure, local government and non-teaching staff have been offered another higher than expected pay increase for 2023/24 which for kitchen staff equates to between 7.44% and 9.25%. Like most other School Meal providers, the reality is that the Council cannot continue to operate without taking further steps to cover rising costs.

On 28th June 2023 the DfE announced its grant funding per meal under the Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) programme would increase from £2.41 for last year to £2.53 in 2023/24, an increase of 12p.

Pupil Meal Price

In light of the above I would advise that the Council's Executive Leadership Team has agreed an increase to the primary school meal price by an equivalent amount - 12p - to **£2.53** per meal (£12.65 per week). This will apply from 1st September 2023 to both paid and 'free' lunches and represents a 5% increase on the current price.

Adult Meals

No further change will be made to the adult meal price notified to you in April 2023. This will remain at £3.50 (plus VAT).

I appreciate the price rise will have an impact on budgets and also on those families who pay for school meals. I would however confirm that the Council continues to provide substantial financial support to the School Meal service and by doing so, is effectively subsidising some of the costs which would otherwise have to be passed onto schools, academies and users of the service.

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We remain committed to providing the best possible service to schools and ensuring pupils enjoy good quality meals each day. Should you have any queries please contact Lynne Bell, Catering Manager, on (01429) 523850 or myself using the details at the top of this letter.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeff Mason', written in a cursive style.

Jeff Mason
Strategic Policy and Facilities Management Manager