

Respect

Empathy

Ambition

Cooperation

Health



Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

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Our ref JF

28th February 2024

Dear Parents/Guardians

I am writing to you regarding a change to our meal prices from April 2024. The rise is due to an increase in food prices and, as like many of us, our suppliers are now paying considerably more for their food stock having no choice but to pass on the increase to the schools they service. Unfortunately, the cost of school meals will increase from £2.35 to **£2.50 per meal** (£11.75 to £12.50 per week).

Although this increase may seem a significant rise, we have been very fortunate to remain at the same meal price for the past 3 years, when many schools had already increased the price of their meals. This rise will also mean the school will make a loss this year, but to ensure we keep the increase to a minimum for the parent, we have decided to only raise the amount for the cost of food and not the service costs which are added to our annual charges. However, we will monitor the situation and, if it is necessary, we may need to increase the cost next year to £2.60 per meal. If this is the case, we will let you know around this time next year.

I would like to remind parents, if your circumstances have changed recently, or you are unsure whether you may qualify for free school meals for your child/children, please follow the link to the Sandwell Education Benefits to find out more information. <https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/education-benefits> If you would like to discuss free school meals, please do not hesitate to contact the school office.

Finally, please ensure all school meals are paid for on a weekly basis, our system will automatically produce payment reminder letters when a balance exceeds £20.00. If you are struggling to pay for your child's meals or would like to discuss your balance further, please contact me and I will be happy to discuss this confidentially. If a balance remains at a high level, you will be asked to send your child to school with a packed lunch until the balance is reduced.

Can I also remind you, school meal orders close at 9.30am, if you know your child will require a school meal but will arrive at school late due to an appointment, please call the school office before this time and book your child's meal. We will always offer your child a meal after this time but it may not be their preferred choice. Equally, if your child books a school meal but has a packed lunch from home, the charge will still be added to their meals account.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

J. Ffrench
Business Manager