

Headteachers, Primary
and Special Schools

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Your
ref:
Our ref: Catering Charges
Date: 28 September 2021

Dear Colleague

Published Menu Changes

I am writing to inform you that it has become necessary to temporarily change the current spring summer published menu and to replace this with a simplified temporary menu alternative. This has become necessary due to the ongoing difficulties being encountering with food product availability and delivery consistency.

A copy of the temporary menu is included with this communication for your convenience. It will not be possible to provide schools with corresponding printed menu leaflets for the temporary menu so I would ask that you share this with parents via the school newsletter.

The simplified temporary menu offering will take effect from 4th October and will be in place for a 3-week period. Colleagues are asked to adhere to the menu change and not request to add or extend the offering. Unit Catering Supervisors will be instructed not to deviate from or add dishes to the menu from existing kitchen supplies. The current published menu will remain in place for the remainder of this week and will only be altered if we experience a shortage on any product lines.

The only exceptions to the temporary menu will be the 07 October census day theme menu, which will continue to be offered to schools, and special schools will still be able to order products which are required to support their pupil's requirements.

These measures are necessary to alleviate the ongoing difficulties we are encountering in meeting the range and volume demands of the current published menu. This is due to the national shortage of drivers and workers within the food industry, an issue which is magnified when operating a fixed menu choice at a time when product supply cannot be guaranteed.

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Kitchens will receive additional stocks of grocery and frozen products during the temporary menu period to fully replenish food stores. This will allow kitchens to return to the published menu with a full stock holding, something we have been unable to do since schools reopened with limited stocks following the summer holiday.

The published autumn winter menu will be introduced week commencing 1st November and your kitchen team will receive separate instruction on ordering arrangements for the new menu. Menu leaflets will arrive with schools at the earliest opportunity however, this may not be before the half term week. Digital media will be shared via school portal post prior to the half term.

I would like to apologise for the inconvenience caused by the ongoing food supply difficulties and the affect this has upon schools. Our ability to enact alternative contingency arrangements, such as increased product range and delivery capacity, remains severely hampered by the national shortage of drivers and workers within the food industry.

I would also like to thank colleagues for their patience and understanding during the lunchtime difficulties of the past weeks.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nigel Craine', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nigel Craine
Head of Schools & Residential Care Catering
Lancashire County Council