



Parents Newsletter

Welcome

We hope you and your families are keeping safe and well in what has been a very challenging year.

Our catering teams have been working to support children's return and re-adjust to full school service. We are still delivering food in classes and now in some schools children are able to come in to the dining hall to receive their hot meals – it lovely to see the children enjoying their meals and being able to socialise with each other.”

We would like to bid you a warm welcome to our Parents Newsletter. We'll use this newsletter to let you know about our school catering news from Eat Culture.

In this issue we want to keep you updated with the latest news on food vouchers. Plus how we are taking part in Veg Power's "Eat Them to Defeat Them," campaign, School Chef of the Year and lots more. We also have some job opportunities.

Nottingham Catering

Marching Back to School

Enjoying a nutritious two course school meal at lunchtime helps children to concentrate better and has a positive impact on their wellbeing. It also saves you time and money. School meals are free for all reception, year 1 and 2 children. If your circumstances have changed you may be entitled to Free School Meals. Check your eligibility at <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>



Thank you to the Keyworkers

As part of the thank you campaign we have been saying thank you to the catering teams for all of their work during the current pandemic. Join us on social media by re-sharing our messages of thanks: “Hats off to the Eat Culture school caterers. These key workers have shown such dedication and really gone the extra mile during the pandemic to make sure that school lunch is served. Thank you for feeding the students and teachers safely.”

Food Vouchers and Parcels

During the Easter Holidays Nottingham schools will issue £30 of food vouchers to you if you receive Free School Meals. Schools may also provide all FSM children either a £15 digital voucher or a food parcel if bubbles are sent home to self-isolate in term time. We will continue to provide our food parcels where necessary and can assure parents that all our parcels meet the national guidance.



Food Tasting Trials

Back in November our Development Chefs were busy testing out some new recipes in schools. Children and staff got to taste a new pork and carrot meat ball with tomato and basil sauce served with spaghetti and tell us what they think.

Our Food Development Chef, Laura Smedley, added, "These are definitely a favourite. Containing carrots to give children a boost of vitamins and minerals, the meat balls cook well and look meaty and inviting. I always find children enjoy a pasta dish so the meat balls are a great addition."

Lisa Fox, Education Catering Manager said, "The children are at the heart of what we do, we want children to enjoy their lunchtimes and get all the nutrition they need to feel energised for the rest of their day."

Mmm... Pork and Carrot Meat Balls



Here's what the children had to say:

"They are yummy in my tummy!" _

"Can we have more please?"

The staff were impressed by the "Perfecto" meatballs too:

"They have lovely flavours."

"Definitely something my children would like."

New Menu Launch

The new taste tested pork and carrot meatballs and falafel (also known as a mini vegan burger) have made it onto the menu! We are delighted that our new menu has launched now that children are back in school. The new menu makes the most of locally grown seasonal produce.



Veg Power

We're supporting Veg Power's campaign, "Eat Them to Defeat Them," again this year in schools - the only way to defeat those veg is to eat them! Veg Power tell us that 80% of our children are not having enough veg so they have created a fun programme to encourage children to enjoy eating their veg.



Starting in June, we'll be promoting a vegetable each week with a campaign and lots of fun for the children.

Watch the Veg Power advert at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C68TQ4uPcgg>



School Chef of The Year

Each year we engage with all our chef supervisors as we look to put colleagues forward for LACA's School Chef of The Year competition. We are very excited that one of our chefs, Kumar Murugan who works at Rufford Primary School is taking part.

It's sponsored by Quorn this year and Kumar is creating a delicious and imaginative meal - we won't tell you what it is yet but we have tasted it and it is amazing Kumar!. He is using at least one Quorn product alongside a 50% fruit-based dessert that reflects school standards. Regional winners will win £100 and the national winner £1,000, best of luck Kumar! Watch this space for updates on how he's getting on.



Red Nose Day – 19th March 2021

We hope all the children have enjoyed celebrating Red Nose Day this year. Our Catering Teams were busy making Red Nose Cookies and Muffins for the children's desert, and also in helping with fund raising by making extra to sell. We are helping schools with their fundraising by selling Red Nose Day Cookies and Muffins or donating the day's takings from our tuck shops. It's never felt more important to have some fun and raise money to support people living incredibly tough lives.

Stepping in to help

With the support from Forest Fields catering staff we were able to provide 180 emergency meals per day for two weeks for Northgate Academy, who had to close their kitchen at only a day's notice due to COVID -19. We have also said a huge thank you for all the other schools and staff who have worked above and beyond by cooking for other schools.

Forest Fields, Chef Supervisor, Lisa Foster said: "The staff here at Forest Fields are an amazing team and we came in early to be able to fulfil the extra meals order for Northgate. We needed to have good time management to successfully deliver not only Northgate's on time but our own here at Forest Fields.

Serving Allergen Free Dinners Safely

Having a child with food allergies can cause a lot of worry for parents and schools. So we have designed a robust step by step system to reassure you that children with food allergies can be served school dinners safely.

How much of a difference can we make together?

We're working with Quorn, one of our suppliers, to promote eating one vegetarian meal a week to reduce our carbon footprint. Quorn have offered to come into schools to do tasting sessions when it is safe to do so and we hope to have access to their sustainability calculator which shows how much carbon can be saved by eating a meat free meal.

Job Opportunities

We regularly have exciting opportunities available for enthusiastic people to join our school catering teams. The positions are term time only, part time - please check the website

<https://jobs.emss.org.uk/>

We also have opportunities to join our mobile catering team in both contracted and casual positions. If you are interested please contact us at eatculture@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

You said..., we did...

We're getting too many apples!

"When we changed over to packed lunches during COVID-19 we ended up with lots of spare apples and we didn't want them to go to waste. So the catering team gave us a variety of different fruit with yogurt options to go and the children started loving the fruit. The changes were delivered really successfully," said Gareth Denman, Deputy Head Forest Fields Primary.

Free School Meals

With Eat Culture lunchtime is the highlight of the school day! It's great for improving children's eating habits and giving children new food experiences.

Children have an array of choice, including lighter options, traditional favourites and tasty new dishes. All schools offer a vegetarian option every day and many of the city's schools provide a halal menu.

Dedicated catering teams will ensure that there is something for everyone and children have unlimited salad, bread, fresh fruit and water at each sitting.

Your child can enjoy free school meals if they are in:

- reception class
- year 1
- year 2

And if you are in receipt of certain benefits your child can continue to have free school meals when they move into Key Stage 2.

It's easy to apply for Free School Meals.

Apply Here:

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>

