

11<sup>th</sup> December 2020

**HEAD OF SCHOOL:** Mr I Bacon

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to let you know of some changes we are making to our catering offer from the beginning of next term, effective from Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January. I am very sorry for the short notice but our discussions with Cucina, our current catering provider, have only just concluded.

Throughout this term there has been a particularly low take-up of student meals, which means that continuing with our offer would not be cost effective as in reality we are heavily subsidising the catering facility from our overall Academy budget.

We have been disappointed with the range and quality of the menu available to our students which, to a large extent, is a result of operating with limited facilities in a Primary School kitchen. As part of the Denbigh Alliance Trust our experience of Cucina as a provider has been extremely positive but the situation as it stands here has become unworkable for both parties.

For these reasons, we have taken the difficult decision to remove our hot food offer from the beginning of next term and limit the availability of food to a cold lunch offer which will include a sandwich, a tray bake, a packet of crisps and a small drink. This food will be prepared fresh, daily, at Denbigh School as part of their wider menu and delivered to us here at Watling Academy, appropriately refrigerated and ready for distribution to the students at lunch time.

We still passionately believe in providing the widest choice of meals and choice for students at Watling Academy and I must stress that this is a temporary measure through until the beginning of the next academic year when we will re-launch an exciting, innovative menu freshly made on site in the extensive facilities we will have available in the new build.

Please find below a summary of answers to questions you may have as a result of this change:

**1. Can I still order a school meal for my child?**

Yes – there will be a cold lunch offering consisting of a sandwich, packet of crisps, tray bake and small drink. There will be a choice of sandwich fillings/flavours.

**2. How do I book?**

You book in exactly the same way, through SIMS Pay, in advance by the close of play on Thursday of the previous week.

**3. What is the cost of the new 'cold packed lunch'?**

The cost will be £2.50.

**4. What impact does this have on breakfast club bookings?**

The only change will be that the food provided will be Continental breakfast items, rather than hot food. The charge will still be £1 per morning, bookable as weekly blocks.

**5. What if I have a balance left in my SIMS Pay account but I do not wish to order a 'cold packed lunch' from Watling?**

We will make arrangements for your payment to be returned to you – more details will follow soon.

**6. Can my child still bring their normal packed lunch to school and what are the arrangements for eating lunch?**

The arrangements for lunchtime will be the same – there will be three sittings to facilitate social distancing in the Hall. Students eating packed lunches ordered through us and those bringing their own will eat together.

**7. My child is entitled to Free School Meals – what do I do?**

You book free of charge through SIMS Pay as normal, in the same way as you do now.

To facilitate a smooth transfer to the new arrangements, I would ask that you ensure that any credit balances on lunch accounts are settled by Friday 11 December and that you only top up your SIMS Pay accounts with the amount needed for hot lunches that you have booked for your children for the rest of the term. Once the new lunches are available to book via SIMS Pay, we will notify all parents accordingly.

Once again, I am sorry that we have had to make this decision, I very much wanted our catering offer at Fairfields to be comparable with what we will be able to offer when we move to the new build, but this has just not proved possible.

Many thanks for your understanding.

Yours faithfully



Mr I Bacon  
Head of School