

Ditcham Park Catering Update (for Autumn Term in the Covid-19 Environment)

In order to keep our community safe during the Covid-19 pandemic, parents have previously been advised of the School's intention to install a temporary "Dining Marquee" for use during the Autumn Term 2020. In the past week this new facility has been built and the School Catering and Estates Team have worked hard since then to get things ready for the new term.

Sited just outside of the South Downs Hall and overlooking the Solent on the "Compass Courtyard", the School Lunch service will fully relocate to this facility in the coming weeks in order to provide our pupils and staff with more space while they eat, particularly important during this period of recommended social distancing, and enabling us to ensure the integrity of our "Year Group Bubbles". Initially EYFS and KS1 pupils will eat lunch in their own classroom areas. Nursery will continue to eat lunch in the Dragonflies building as normal for the entire term.

The School has consulted with the Independent School's Catering Consultancy (ISCC) and taken guidance on the best and safest practices for the return of our catering services at this challenging time. Some items of our normal menus, such as the "help yourself" salad bar, have needed to be removed just now but Chef Neil and his team have created a tasty menu for the first half of term, working within the recommended guidelines.

For the first 7 days of term, while the children and catering staff re-adjust to the new facility and arrangements for lunch the School will serve a packed lunch for pupils featuring a tasty baguette or wrap, a pasta pot, piece of fruit, savoury snack and home-baked sweet treat for after. These will be served in a disposable individually packed lunch bag and sized appropriately for pupils age ranges. Pupils will be able to refill their water bottles in the Dining Marquee at lunch time.

From week 3 the service will move to a hot lunch offering, including the ever-popular Jackets with tasty fillings, Pasta Bakes, Ditcham Rolls, warming curries and "Fish Friday"! From week 4 the team are planning to reintroduce many of the "ditchamDelicious Autumn Lunchtime Favourites", albeit necessarily adjusted to comply with Covid-Safe service requirements in place at the time.

Recognising the necessary change in menus for the first 12 days of term (3rd – 18th September) the School has applied a discount of between 30-35% on daily lunch costs which we believe represents exceptional value for money for parents, and will save you the trouble of making a packed lunch at home. The daily charge is shown in the table below in the column headed "Weeks 1-3". The menu for these weeks can be seen at the end of this letter to parents.

Those joining us for a School lunch will need to book their choices weekly in advance, using an online menu/booking system. Parents are asked to complete this each Friday the link for the first 2 weeks are shown below, the forms for week 3 and beyond will be emailed to parents whose children are signed up to termly School Lunches on Friday 11th September.

[3rd - 4th September](#)
[7th - 11th September](#)

Menus for Week 4 to the end of this half term will be published shortly, and the price per day will move the usual “Booked Termly in Advance” structure for those who have signed up for School Lunches until the end of term. As promised previously, the School has held the cost of a school lunch to the 2019/20 rates. For information, the “walk-in” cost of a School Lunch is also provided in the table.

School Lunches		Autumn 2020 (cost per day)		
		Standard Walk-In Daily Charge	Booked Termly in Advance	Weeks 1-3
		21 st – September to 18 th December		3 rd – 18 th September
Early Years (Nursery-Prep)		Free	Free	Free
Transition		£4.20	£3.50	£2.40
Juniors (LJ - UJ)		£4.20	£3.50	£2.50
Seniors		£4.65	£4.00	£2.85

In a change to the usual arrangements, the School Bursary has not charged in advance for lunches but will do so retrospectively at the end of each Autumn half-term.

Parents and pupils are advised that, throughout the period of Covid-19 Year Group Bubble restrictions, all pupils will be required to eat lunch with their year group peers irrespective of whether they choose a school or home provided lunch.

Finally, your children may notice a change or two in our Catering Team for Autumn 2020! Joining Chef Neil, Phil and Karolina we welcome Fiona and Sally! They have really enjoyed getting back to work after the period of lockdown, and to celebrate they have donned their smart new Ditcham Uniforms! The team are really looking forward to welcoming the children back to School.

28th August 2020