

Parents and Carers
Primary Schools

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Your Reference:

Dear Parent/Carer

School meal prices in Plymouth - September 2022

As you will know, CATER^{ed}, the school lunch provider at your child's school is a cooperative trading company owned by the schools (your child's school) and the council. CATER^{ed} was set up in 2015 to ensure that all schools (as shareholders) could provide great tasting school dinners and also to ensure that budgets for school food were spent on school food without impacting on others areas of school funding. Over 80% of our meals are cooked from scratch each and every day in your schools' own production kitchen using locally sourced, seasonal and fresh ingredients.

You may well have recently seen a press article about a price increase that the CATER^{ed} Board have had to introduce from the start of the **Autumn Term in September 2022.**

The new price for a hot, two-course school meal will be £2.40 for primary schools with effect from **Monday 05 September 2022.**

The future increase is as a result of continuing rises in food prices that we will have all experienced in our household shopping baskets at this time of exceptional increases in the cost of living which has seen many of our staple ingredients go up in price by an average 20%. Unfortunately, with the continued recovery from the pandemic and the war in Ukraine, this uncertainty looks set to continue. We have also ensured that our staff continue to be paid the full accredited UK Living Wage as they prepare and serve 11,000 meals every day to make sure children get the fuel they need to perform well at school.

This is the first increase in the price of the school meal in Plymouth since 2018 and, whilst we know that any increase in costs hits the disposable income of families, this is something that the Board have been working hard to avoid up to this point. School meal prices in Plymouth will remain amongst the lowest in the South-west continuing the CATER^{ed} ethos of providing excellent value for money for local families whilst supporting local employment and the local economy.

We hope that those families who pay for their child's school lunch will understand and continue to support the service that we know offers fantastic choice, great value for money and helps children be ready to learn.

Pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are entitled to a free **universal infant free school** meal and other pupils may be entitled to a free school meal based on household income.

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If you think you may be entitled to a free school meal we would encourage you to talk directly to your school or visit <http://web.plymouth.gov.uk/homepage/catered/cateredfreeschoolmeals.htm>.

Registering for free school meals also helps your child's school with additional funding through the Pupil Premium which will be used to support education and learning.

Thank you for your continued support.



Brad Pearce
Managing Director on behalf of the CATER^{ed} Board