



26th January 2017

Changes to lunchtimes – Family Dining Service

To Parents and Carers,

I am pleased to confirm to you that when pupils return to school from the half term break on Tuesday 28th February, we launch our new Family Dining Service at lunchtimes. Our family service style lunchtimes will mean that children can now take more time over their meals and mix with children from all ages. It encourages social interaction, good table manners and provides opportunities for older children to take responsibility and leadership.

Food will be served by our catering team in tureens on each table and served to the younger children by an older child in Year 5 or Year 6 who has been selected due to their maturity and friendly manner. This style of service follows the traditional eating which takes place at many of our children's homes.

Due to the high meal numbers and to ensure this system works well, lunchtime will be split into two separate sittings. The children have been split into two 'families' with an equal mix of Reception to Year 6 children in each. The children will eat together with their 'family' each day on the same table. The order in which the families dine will alternate each half term and the experience will be the same on each sitting.

This will allow children the time to eat and enjoy their meal in a calm, relaxed environment where the experience is much better than in our current cafeteria style service. We will retain the same number of midday supervisors to ensure the children are well supervised over lunchtime.

We believe that school meals are an important part of our learning curriculum. They are varied, well balanced and nutritious; each meal includes a main course, vegetables and salad, pudding of the day or fruit or yoghurt and water. We will serve one meal choice each day with a vegetarian option available. The menu has been chosen by reviewing our most popular dishes and consulting with children about their favourite meals.

Meals are freshly made every day by our talented catering team using great quality produce:

- Fresh vegetables and potatoes, locally when in season
- UK farm assured chicken, beef and pork
- Free range eggs from local farms
- 100% salmon and white fish fillet from sustainable sources
- Dolphin friendly tuna
- Choice UK cheddar
- Please keep us informed of any specific dietary requirements or allergies.

We strongly encourage all children to eat school meals however any child who wishes to remain on packed lunches must do so for a full half term; there will be no daily choice. Children having a packed lunch will also sit in 'packed lunch families' within the dining hall. The payment for school meals will continue through the Parent Pay system; there will be no change to the payment process.

Initially we will use a two week menu which will be available to view on our website.

In order to ensure that this is a success, we are empowering children to take an active role in the management of lunch times at school. We are inviting children in Year 5 and 6 to become ambassadors for lunchtime. These children will act as a pupil voice for dinner time and will have a number of



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responsibilities, chiefly among them to monitor the quality of lunches and provide feedback to school leadership about areas for development in the future and acting as 'playground buddies' for other children.

Through family service our children learn to be a family where older children take care of the younger children on their table daily. Serving food and supporting each other helps to reinforce our ASPIRE values; particularly Independence and Respect.

The children will also have access to more lunchtime clubs and activities such as Minecraft, Active Games (sports based games led by our Year 5 Active Leaders), art and craft group, DVD club and TEKK Challenge (an engineering and enterprise club for Y5 and Y6 only).

The children are very excited about the developments and have provided lots of positive feedback, as have many parents. The children will receive support over the next few weeks to prepare for the change and we have arranged training for the staff and our new Year 5 and 6 servers. We know Family Service will transform the lunch time experience for the pupils at Willow Academy and will result in a calmer, more structured and positive experience for all children.

Please support this process by talking to your child about the changes and encouraging them to get involved in the clubs and activities we will provide.

For updates and menu information, please refer to our website.

Thank you for your continued support,

Yours Sincerely

Mrs D Sumner.

Interim Headteacher.

Note:

Families who are in receipt of certain benefits may also be entitled to free school meals. These benefits include:

- *Income Support*
- *Income Based Jobseekers Allowance*
- *Income Related Employment and Support Allowance*
- *Child Tax Credit with an annual income of less than £16,190, provided they are not receiving Working Tax Credit.*
- *The 'Guaranteed' element of the State Pension Credit*
- *Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999*

Please ensure you apply for free school meals if you are in receipt of any of these benefits, even if your child is in Key Stage 1 and receives the Universal Free School Meal as this can help the school claim additional funding which can then be spent on improvements for children.