



Dear Parents, Guardians & Carers

I am writing to you as UK food price rises soared to a record rate in December, figures show, as retail industry bosses warned, that high inflation would continue in 2023.

Within East Sussex it is affecting the school meals contract to a point of operations being untenable without a further in year meal price increase.

To give you some context; within the East Sussex contract, on average food prices have risen by a further 7.5% since September alone, this being constantly driven up and not aided by the impact of Russia's war in Ukraine where a lot of foods and feed are sourced.

We have continued to work tirelessly to mitigate the impact being passed on to you as we know families are already struggling with the ongoing cost of living crisis.

We have worked with the catering provider to explore options of menu reduction, but any other items being removed will directly impact the School Food Standards and quality of the food that is being produced. The scale of the East Sussex contract has allowed our catering provider to protect this element as the number of schools in the contract give better buying power for quality ingredients.

In depth market research has been carried out by ESCC to look at other local authorities and catering providers to ensure our contract has comparable pricing using similar models and we are confident we are in line with others.

Therefore, from Monday 30th January 2023 the meal prices will be as follows:

Primary: £2.60

Secondary: £2.74 with a tariff uplift of 7.5%

This will be protected until September 1st 2023.

To support this, you as a parent can do the following:

If your child is in YR, Y1 or Y2 book them in for a meal on Census Day (Jan 19th, May 18th 2023)

Your school receives their funding based on the number of KS1 pupils that eat a school meal that day, so even if your child does not eat school meals all the time, on those 2 days you can really make a difference to your schools funding from government.

Furthermore £2.60 for a two-course meal is still comparable vs the cost of a packed lunch and will help the wider cost of living crisis facing the UK.

Lobbying your local MP for DfE to increase the funding or change the threshold who is eligible.

Caroline Ansell
Conservative
MP for Eastbourne

Maria Caulfield
Conservative
MP for Lewes

Nus Ghani
Conservative
MP for Wealden

Sally-Ann Hart
Conservative
MP for Hastings

Huw Merriman
Conservative
MP for Bexhill and Battle

Thank you for your continued support in these challenging times.

Yours sincerely,

Hannah Jones

Senior Contract Officer, ESCC.

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