



27<sup>th</sup> March 2024

## Re: School Meal Prices

Dear Parents and Carers

Across the country, families, businesses, hospitals and schools are all facing rising costs for fuel, food and other necessary items. And these costs are continuing to increase. At Brooke Weston Trust we are acutely aware of our duty to ensure the meals we provide remain as affordable as possible for all our children.

Last September, with food supply prices at a high, we made the difficult decision to delay implementing a price increase truly reflecting the full cost of producing our meals. In fact, we have been absorbing most of these costs over the last couple of years. Now, sadly we have concluded this approach is no longer viable and we must take the difficult decision to pass on more, but not all, of the price increase we have been carrying to our families.

We are proud of the quality of the food we provide and as an in-house catering operation, we are not driven by profit and there are no shareholders to please. Our simple goal is to break even. This price increase will mean we can continue to deliver a high-quality service, healthy, nutritious meals, catering for allergens and dietary requirements; served in a safe and inviting environment. We will continue to work with our suppliers to minimise our costs and seek further opportunities to be as efficient as we can whilst maintaining our high standards.

From **27<sup>th</sup> May 2024** we will therefore be implementing a price rise on all our meals, representing a daily increase of £0.44p per day if both breakfast and lunch are taken 5 days per week. A main meal including a dessert will be £2.95, with breakfast at £0.99p. We know from our own benchmarking this still represents excellent value for money compared to many other schools outside of Brooke Weston Trust. Our plan, subject to circumstances outside our control, is not to apply any further increase until at least September 2025.

### Remember to check if you are entitled to Free School Meals

You may be entitled to apply for free school meals for your children if you receive one of the following income related benefits:

- Income support
- Income based job seekers allowance
- Income related employment and support allowance
- Universal Credit as an annual household earnings of less than £7400

- Child tax credit combined with a both a household income below £16,190 per annum and not in receipt of any working tax credit
- Support under part VI one of the immigration and asylum act 1999
- Guarantee element of state pension credit

If you require further information, please contact the school office who will be able to assist you in completing a free school meal eligibility check.

We are also reducing the number of pre-packaged drink cartons and bottles we make available for sale, instead we will have water freely available for hydration. We are working towards reducing plastic waste in all our kitchens in line with government guidance. Our eventual aim is to make all our schools plastic free. We would therefore encourage all our students to bring in water bottles that can be refilled at water stations around our schools.

Yours sincerely



Theresa Jackson  
Head of Catering

