

**Children and Families Directorate**  
C/O Delamere House  
Delamere Street  
Crewe  
CW1 2LL

20 May 2024

Dear Parents/carers

**RE: School meal changes**

I am writing to update you on some changes to the school catering service provided by Cheshire East Council.

For many years, our dedicated staff have ensured that high quality school meals are provided to children and young people across schools in Cheshire East. However, over recent years, there have been increasing financial pressures in running this service due to both food and transport inflation and pay rises that have impacted on our running costs. This has led to the council providing a significant subsidy towards school meal costs.

This is not a service that the council must provide and, given the current financial position, is not one that can be sustained. Therefore, it is with regret that **the council has decided to cease trading its school catering service by April 2025**. Your school has been informed of this decision and will be making the necessary changes to ensure that school meals are still available at your school. The existing staff in kitchens will not be affected and will continue to operate under whatever new arrangement your school puts in place.

As the council has removed its subsidy to the school catering service for this financial year and, despite making all available savings, **we will need to significantly increase the charge made to schools to provide a school meal from September 2024 to March 2025**. This increase in cost is likely to be passed onto parents/carers who currently purchase school meals for their children as schools also do not have the budget to subsidise school meals.

This has been a difficult decision that we know will have a significant impact on schools, parents/carers and children and young people, but we hope you will understand that this is unavoidable in the current circumstances.

Your school is likely to look for a future option that provides a more cost-effective school meal service in the longer term, so we hope that this is only a temporary price increase. In the meantime, we hope that you will continue to support your school meal service that is doing the best it can to provide your child with a healthy and nutritious meal.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "D M Clorley". The signature is written in a light grey color on a white background.

Diane Clorley  
**Interim Education Catering Services Manager**