



VERNON PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Friday 19 July 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

I am writing to you with an update regarding the school catering service. You may have seen on social media that Cheshire East council are no longer providing a school catering service with effect from April 2025. Included alongside this communication is the letter from Cheshire East explaining the change. With effect from 1st September 2024, Cheshire East will be increasing our price per meal to **£3.20**; we have no option but to pass this charge directly onto our families.

This charge is the same for all meals. However, the reimbursement we receive from the government for universal infant free school meals (UIFSM) is £2.53. This means that school are required to cover the deficit of 67p for every meal taken by Reception and KS1 children. We have calculated that if everyone takes a UIFSM from September to Christmas, this would cost the school £7989.75.

We have joined a purchasing collaborative organised by schools in Cheshire East which is working to procure a new catering provider. Due to the nature of a procurement process, we are expecting the new supplier to join us from January 2025. This will mean that the price of meals should fall again and we are hopeful that with the purchasing power of the collaborative, we will not have a deficit for UIFSM.

As a school, we are deeply frustrated with the situation Cheshire East has forced upon us and we are put in a difficult position from a budget perspective, as we were only made aware of this cost in May. We are asking for your support to help us minimise the deficit we are covering from September to Christmas.

If your child is in Reception or KS1, they are welcome to have a free school meal as normal. However, if you are able to, we would be extremely grateful for a voluntary contribution of 67p for each meal. This will be payable on spider. As always, you are welcome to send your child into school with a packed lunch.

Please be assured that we are working towards a resolution and we will update you in September when the successful bidder will be announced. Our lovely catering staff will be staying with us and the delicious meals they create will continue.

Thank you so much for your support with this situation.

Yours faithfully
Mrs J Carvell
Headteacher



'Nobody else is quite like me'

