



Important – Please Read

School Meals- New Booking System

Dear Parents/Carers,

We have recently reviewed our school lunchtime menu following feedback from both children and parents and have recognised that a change was necessary. We have ensured that all meals meet the current Food Standards for School Meals in the UK.

In reviewing the new menus, we felt it was also an appropriate time to introduce a booking system for school meals. In most schools, parents are required to book their child's school lunch in advance. This helps to reduce food waste and allows parents to make clear choices for their child.

Children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 will continue to receive a free school meal; however, this **must** still be pre-booked. Similarly, if your child is eligible for Free School Meals, they will continue to receive a free meal, but this must also be pre-booked.

To ensure that ingredients can be ordered in time, we will require all meals to be booked **three weeks in advance**. Previously at Forestdale, all children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 were provided with a hot meal daily, with no option for parents to provide a packed lunch. This will no longer be the case.

If you feel that your child will not eat anything from the school menu, you are welcome to provide a healthy packed lunch. Please note that we do not allow nut-based products (due to allergies), fizzy drinks, or sweets in lunchboxes, and we strongly discourage chocolate.

A daily sandwich option will also be available to pre-order. Each sandwich will be served with a piece of fruit and a pudding choice.

We will be using the SchoolMoney system for all school meals, and it is essential that all parents have an active account. You will be able to pre-order meals for the three-week menu cycle. If meals are ordered late, we cannot guarantee that your child will receive their chosen meal, as food will be ordered based on bookings.

If no meal is ordered and no packed lunch is provided, a sandwich will be made for your child; however, this will be the only option available. We are no longer able to provide alternative meals, as we must adhere to the set menu.

If your child has any dietary requirements (e.g. gluten-free or vegetarian), please ensure that these are correctly recorded on the school system. A vegetarian option will be available daily; however, please note that we are unable to provide halal meals.

Please find the new menus on our website. You will only need to order the main meal. Your child will be able to choose their own sides and pudding as they do currently.

We encourage you to discuss the options with your child to help them make their choices. The new menu (Week 1) will begin on the **week commencing 4th May**, and bookings will open on **20th April**. For the next few weeks, you will NOT need to order any meal and your child will choose their meal themselves which is a usual routine for them.

You must book lunches three weeks in advance. Therefore, when you login to your account from 20th April you will need to order lunches for the following weeks: week beginning 4th May, week beginning 11th May and week beginning 18th May.

In addition, we will still be purchasing bagels for all pupils from the school budget, and they can access these during registration or before breaktime. We are no longer allowing children to purchase 'tuck' at breaktime. If you wish your child to have a healthy snack, then you can provide this if you wish (no sweets or chocolate please). Fruit is available in EYFS and Key Stage One (years 1 and 2).

Frequently asked questions about booking meals is included below. Payments can continue to be made via the app where applicable. For pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, meals will show as £0.00, but you must still complete the checkout process to confirm your booking.

If you require any support, please contact the school office, where we will be happy to assist you during this transition to the new system.

Yours faithfully,

Lara Billingham
Deputy Headteacher

How to book a meal

1. Sign up to schoolmoney if you have not already
2. Look at the menus and talk to your child about what they would like to eat each day for the three weeks shown
3. Go into lunch orders
4. Click on the date and tick the meal you wish your child to have
5. Add to basket
6. Checkout to ensure the meal has been ordered
7. Pay for the meal if you need to

Questions

Can I book for only particular days?

Yes, of course. Please remember that if a meal has not been booked and you have not provided your child with a packed lunch, then only a sandwich can be provided.

How far in advance should I book?

The three-week menu will operate on a rolling programme. If any changes are made, we will inform you and issue updated menus. Meals must be booked at least two weeks in advance. If meals are booked late, we cannot guarantee availability, and your child may only be offered a sandwich.

My child won't eat anything on the menu. What should I do?

If your child does not like anything on the menu, you may provide a packed lunch. Children who receive a free school meal will also be able to choose a sandwich option if they do not want the main meal choices. We are unable to provide individual alternative meals.

My child is gluten-free. Can they have a school meal?

Yes, we can ensure that gluten-free ingredients are provided, but it is essential that meals are ordered in advance. If meals are ordered late, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to provide the required meal.

How will my child know what they are having?

At the start of the day, during registration, your child's class teacher will read out which children have ordered a school meal. If no meal has been ordered, we will check that your child has a packed lunch. If your child does not have a packed lunch, they will be provided with a sandwich.

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that a school meal or packed lunch has been ordered for their child. However, we will ensure that no child goes without food. If your child does not eat their meal, we will contact you to inform you so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

