



Dear Parents/Carers

We want to take this opportunity to give you some really important information about your school meal service from September and reassure you that we have everything covered so we can continue to feed children around the country safely.

At Aspens, many of our team are parents themselves and have faced similar challenges over the past four months - homeschooling, keeping young minds positive and feeding them 24/7 to name a few. We want to take this opportunity to reassure you that our food provision continues to be healthy, nutritious but above all else, safe in the unprecedented environment we have found ourselves in.

From September, schools will kick start their minds, their mental health will improve when they are reunited with their friends and we want to make sure that we also contribute to their wellbeing by giving them nutritious food, safely, from day one.

We appreciate how many changes schools are having to make to keep children and staff safe and we are working with them to offer the best food solution according to their individual requirements. We also need to make sure it's still an enjoyable experience for all.

Here's a summary of what we are doing behind the scenes to give you reassurance as you head into the summer break:

- Our lunches provide a nutritious range of food that differs every day and will get their taste buds buzzing again. This will take the pressure away from parents/carers, having to provide that balance and variety with a lunch from home. For our Laurus schools We have put together a simple menu with lots of student favourites, many items packed with 'hidden' veggies and additional nutritional value. All items served come ready packaged to minimise hand contact and keep the service fast to move pupils through the dining facilities speedily and safely.
- Aspens use environmentally friendly packaging wherever possible; biodegradable and compostable food containers, made from - bamboo, paper, sugar cane, recycled and recyclable plastic, our bottled drinks are not in single use plastic, and we also offer water in a card tetra packs too.
- All changes made will be in conjunction with up to date government led guidance and advice, especially around social distancing, food safety and enhanced cleaning regimes. This includes agreeing with your school changes to timings and locations if required.
- We are also reviewing payment methods and ordering processes in conjunction with our schools teams to ensure we are providing the safest method possible, in the case of Laurus schools the decision has been taken to issue pupils with contactless cards for payment in the dining areas.

- Our teams are carrying out specific return to work and COVID-19 training and will be certified "fit to work" before returning.
- Our due diligence procedures, including food hygiene and safety have new, enhanced recording procedures ready for September. Each meal service is then certified as being compliant by our Head of QHSE.
- Food suppliers are able to support changes needed in delivery schedules to ensure that there is limited crossover and a 'no contact' process. For example, no entrance to the kitchens will be allowed and delivery boxes are to be unpacked and wiped before storage.

We also understand that there may be some families that have had a change in financial circumstances and may now be entitled to apply for Free School Meals. Please look into this. This website helps you to establish if you can claim.

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>

We are experts in feeding school aged children and are really looking forward to providing your child with their school meal when we return in September. We also look forward to welcoming all the new starters to school.

I hope this letter has helped to make your decision about school food easier and we will provide more detailed information about the return to school food closer to September.

Aspens Services