



**NEED YOUR
IMAGINATION!**

PRIMARY SCHOOL MEALS: ANSWERING PARENT QUESTIONS

JULY 2025

 **Chartwells**





YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL MEALS

Passionate about parental engagement

At Chartwells, our mission is to safely fuel every child's learning with tasty, nutritious, and sustainable food.

We know that food plays a central role in every child's school day. One of the first questions many parents ask when their child gets home is, *"What did you have for lunch today?"*

That's why it's so important to bridge the information gap—helping parents and guardians better understand what's on the menu and the positive impact that a nutritious school meal can have on their child's wellbeing and education.

Following our recent parent engagement sessions, we've compiled answers to the most frequently asked questions to support families and provide reassurance about the food we serve every day.

UK GOVERNMENT
SCHOOL FOOD STANDARDS

CHARTWELLS
NUTRITIONAL STANDARDS

FAQS
SUMMARY OF KEY TOPICS



SCHOOL FOOD STANDARDS

The School Food Standards are designed to help children develop healthy eating habits.

- The School Food Standards (SFS) are Government defined nutritional standards that must be adhered to.
- SFS state child's healthy, balanced diet should consist of:
 - plenty of fruit and vegetables
 - plenty of unrefined starchy foods
 - some meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein
 - some milk and dairy foods
 - small amount of food and drink high in fat, sugar and salt
- SFS are highly detailed and nutritional technical standard covering ingredients which are/aren't allowed to be served, specific weights and measures as well as frequency that ingredients or dishes can appear on a menu.

All Chartwells menus are School Food Standard compliant.



EXAMPLES OF SCHOOL FOOD STANDARDS

A snapshot of what informs every recipe served and Chartwells menu



MEAT, FISH, EGGS & BEANS

Portion of food from this group every day

Oily fish once or more across 3-week menu cycle

Non-dairy protein on 3 or more days per week



MILK & DAIRY

A portion of food from this group every day



FOODS HIGH IN FATS, SUGAR & SALT (HFSS)

No confectionary, chocolate or chocolate-coated products.

No added salt

Max two portions of battered/ fried or breadcrumbed food per week (*i.e. fish fingers & chips equates to the two portions*)



STARCHY FOODS

One or more wholegrain varieties of starchy food each week.

Three or more different starchy foods each week.



FRUITS & VEGETABLES

Dessert containing at least 50% fruit two or more times per week

One or more portions of salad or vegetables every day



CHARTWELLS NUTRITIONAL STANDARDS

**Committed to delivering over and above the
School Food Standards**

- In 2017, Public Health England (PHE) set out the UK Government's target to reduce sugar by 20% by 2020.
- Chartwells has gone beyond the 20% reduction targets in all categories for recipes on our menu.
- This has been achieved by:
 - Recipe reformulation
 - Innovative development
 - Working with suppliers to reduce sugar content

ACHIEVING 38% SUGAR
REDUCTION SINCE 2016

COMMITMENT TO
CONTINUOUS
IMPROVEMENT

RAISING SUGAR AWARENESS
THROUGH OUR NUTRITION
EDUCATION PROGRAMME



USEFUL INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Answering key parental questions

- **What is included in a school meal?**

Every Chartwells menu developed is aligned to the School Food Standards plus our own nutritional standards. Every recipe must be approved as compliant to the School Food Standards by our team of qualified nutritionists.

Every day, parents can be assured that a school meal will offer:

- At least two portions of fruit and vegetables
- Dairy food items rich in calcium for strong bones and teeth
- Starchy carbohydrates to provide energy
- A protein source to support the body's growth and repair.

- **How are the menus put together? Please explain what choices are available to our children and why?**

There are always at least four choices every day for every child including familiar favourites such as Jacket Potato and homemade Tomato Pasta [please note medical diets excluded].

- **Are there Halal options available?**

Working in partnership with each school, we tailor menus to meet their specific requirements, such as the provision of Halal meals.



USEFUL INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Every menu served is nutritionally approved

- **Feeding children with allergies or special diet?**

The safety of every child we serve is paramount. As such, we have an industry leading Medical Diet Policy in place, overseen by our team of nutritionists.

For more information please contact: chartwells.medicaldiets@compass-group.co.uk

- **Is providing dessert counter-productive to healthy eating?** Desserts are beneficial source of nutrition and part of a balanced meal. Over 50% of our primary menu dessert recipes contain fruit and/or vegetables. For example, our Chocolate Brownie has grated sweet potato and carrot added to the mixture bringing their natural sweetness in place of sugar. This aligns to our Chartwells Commitment to exceed Public Health England's 20% sugar reduction target.

- **Do you engage with Parents and Pupils?**

Ongoing engagement with both parents and pupils is important to us. We welcome the opportunity to interact with parents, helping them understand the school meal framework and how a nutritionally balanced school meal can help children get the best from their learning. Our pupils benefit from tasting with in-school cooks and executive chefs as well as curriculum linked workshops from Chartwells educational nutrition team. In-person parent, or pupil, workshops - as well as feedback surveys – are invaluable. We often attend parents' evenings and other key events whenever possible.

Please ask your school to arrange a session with your Chartwells team.