FAMILY

Information Pack

School Meals by Aspens Services

ASPENS

September 2024

About Aspens

Great tasting food that your child will love

Aspens is the company chosen by your school to provide the meal service for its pupils and we are looking forward to welcoming your child for their school lunches. We are experts in school catering and have years of experience when it comes to school food.

The food children eat at school plays an important role in their wellbeing and eating a well-balanced diet will not only maintain and improve their health but will also set them on the right track for later life. We understand this and that's why we are passionate about serving fresh, high quality and locally sourced food that is cooked in our kitchen.

Knowing Where Your Food Comes From

We take our responsibility of catering for today's children and young adults seriously. All of our dishes are prepared every day using quality, fresh and seasonal ingredients that are responsibly sourced. Our supply chain is traceable, so we can ensure the provenance of all produce.

Our dishes are created and served by experienced and enthusiastic staff. As well as ensuring the food on the plate is healthy, we want our customers to understand the importance of eating the right foods and help them with their food and nutrition journey.

Our Fantastic Food

We don't only create delicious favourite dishes from home and around the world, we make it fun!

We aim to make lunchtime the best time of the day and it definitely is when we hold one of our regular theme days! Planned to link in to the school calendar or seasonal healthy food initiatives, our staff may dress up and decorate the counter to serve something deliciously different on the menu - it's the stuff of great school food memories!

Free Tasty Lunches!

All children that are in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are currently entitled to receive UNIVERSAL INFANT FREE SCHOOL MEALS! We think it's a fantastic idea so please make sure you support this initiative. Not only will you be saving money, but you will also be giving your child a nutritionally balanced meal to fuel their bodies for the rest of their learning day.

Please note this is not to be confused with **FREE SCHOOL MEALS** which is an entitlement that some children can receive due to their parents/carer's circumstances. If you feel you may be entitled to receive FREE SCHOOL MEALS, you should request the relevant forms from your school office or look at this website. **www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals.**

SAMPLE MENU

FOOD FESTIVAL by Aspens

LUNCHTIME

World
Week 1

Autumn Winter 2024-25:
2/9, 23/9, 14/10, 4/11, 25/11, 16/12, 6/1, 27/1

	The Main Event	Meat-Free Magic (Veggie Dish)	Rainbow Alley (Vegetables and Salads)	Big Topping (Filled Jackets)	Dessert Trolley
Monday	Margherita Pizza Slice and Wedges	Veggie Pepper and Sweetcorn Pizza Slice with Wedges	Sweetcorn	Beans, Cheese or Tuna Mayo	Toffee Frozen Yoghurt
Tuesday	Chicken Tikka Curry (Halal/Non Halal)	Veg Samosa Style Pie	Kachumber Salad and Wholegrain Rice	Beans, Cheese or Tuna Mayo	Sweet Potato Brownie
Wednesday	Roast Chicken, Stuffing, Roast Potatoes and Gravy (Halal/Non Halal)	Quorn Sausage, Roast Potatoes and Gravy	Peas and Carrots	Beans, Cheese or Tuna Mayo	Forest Fruits Jelly Pots
Thursday	Sticky Chinese Chicken Noodles (Halal/Non Halal)	Spanish Omelette and Herby Diced Potatoes	Green Beans	Beans, Cheese or Tuna Mayo	Cookie Dough Apple Crumble
Friday	Golden Fish Fingers or Salmon Fingers and Chips	Veggie Burger and Chips	Baked Beans	Beans, Cheese or Tuna Mayo	Jammy Thumbprint Biscuits

Daily Salad Bowl, Freshly Baked Bread, Yoghurts and Cut Fruit
Available Daily

Pasta Twirler
Available Every Day
Topped Pasta
Hot Pasta topped with Homemade Tomato Sauce & Cheese

W1

PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR SCHOOL LUNCHES

If your child is new to school lunches, they may feel a little uncertain, but you can help them to be prepared.

Look through the menu together, ask them to choose their favourites and point out the kind of things that you know they usually like to eat. Try new things at home to help them to become used to trying different foods.

Here's a little more about what's on our menus:

THE MAIN EVENT TENT

EVERYTHING YOU NEED ON A PLATE!

Our Main Event balanced meals are a source of vegetables, protein from meat or fish, carbohydrates and healthy fats as demonstrated in the Eatwell Guide.

Proteins are the building blocks for our muscles...

... helping to build our bodies and make us strong, like lego blocks.

Oily fish can help you to focus better in lessons and boost your brain power.

Choose the Main Event to get your protein from meat and fish.

RAINBOW ALLEY

We encourage choices of fruit and vegetables, of many different colours, so your child can get the vitamins and minerals they needs.

Different coloured fruit and vegetables help our bodies in different ways.

Fill your plate with all the colours of the rainbow...

... and fill your body with the vitamins and minerals it needs.

Magic Meals Because...

Our Meat Free Magic balanced meals are a source of vegetables, protein from plants, carbohydrates and healthy fats as demonstrated in the Eatwell Guide.

... they have plant proteins to make you strong and are good for the planet too.

... they're loaded up with vibrant veg, filling fibre, plant proteins and valuable vitamins - a great recipe for a healthy body.

... our recipes can provide up to 10 different plants, fruit and vegetables in one meal!

Load up, load up!

Our Crispy Skin Jacket potatoes with a choice of topping are a tasty and nutritious option.

Our jackets are filling and full of nutrients and to top it off you choose your topping!

Eat the potato skin to get more fibre.

Gut bugs are good bugs! Keep your tummies healthy with starch foods - like potatoes.

Whoosh your way to 5 a day!

Our homemade sauces are packed with vegetables and plant proteins, served with pasta for a healthy tasty lunchtime choice.

Keep your energy levels high with our pasta main and whizz through the day.

You won't believe how many veggies are in our homemade pasta sauces!

Feel fuller for longer with our wholegrain pasta twirls a super tummy rumble stopper!

The Pasta Twirler

Be a smart cookie! Choose something different every day to get all different kinds of goodness.

Our custard and yogurts are full of dairy goodness with calcium that helps to keep your bones, skin and teeth healthy.

Our fruity desserts are packed full of Vitamin C to help fight off those coughs and cold! Or pick a piece of fruit!

Stop at the Dessert Trolley

We offer a variety of fruit, yoghurt and homemade desserts across the week.

THE 14 MAJOR FOOD ALLERGENS

- Celery
- Gluten
- Eggs
- Fish
- Soya
- Sesame
- Crustaceans
- Peanut
- Milk
- Lupin
- Tree Nuts
- Sulphur Dioxide
- Mustard
- Molluscs

SPECIAL DIETS AND FOOD ALLERGENS

Don't think that your child can't enjoy our great food if they have a special diet - this is an important part of our catering service. We can provide food if they have an intolerance, an allergy, or require an alternative choice due to religious beliefs.

Aspens already caters for lots of children with allergies, we have robust food safety procedures and our staff has regular allergen and food safety training. It is still important that parents talk to us so we can work together and continue to provide meals that are safe for their child to eat.

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is one of our core values - we recognise that our activities can affect the environment and so we do what we can to minimise our impact.

This includes phasing out single use plastics, using environmentally friendly disposables and cleaning products, offering non meat proteins and seasonal fruit and vegetables.

Why School Meals are GREAT

Lunch time is an important part of a child's school day, giving pupils a break with friends and the chance to recharge their batteries. But why should you choose a school meal? Take a look at the ten great reasons we have come up with!

1. School meals are delicious, healthy, safe, varied and could be free!
2. Measures have been taken around staff training, food safety and enhanced cleaning to ensure that all of our dinners are safe.
3. It would save you hours making packed lunches for your child!
4. Children receiving Free School Meals have exactly the same choice as everyone else and no-one will know that your child's meal is free.
5. You can see the menus and choices online so you know exactly what they'll be eating.
6. The school catering team is fully trained and ready to cater for children with allergies or other special diets.
7. School meals help encourage good eating habits from an early age and provide the opportunity to further develop their social skills as they sit down with friends to enjoy their meals.
8. There are plenty of opportunities to try new foods and more fussy eaters are much more likely to try new things if their friends are eating the same meals as they are.
9. It's easy to apply – speak to your school office for details or check your eligibility here: www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals
10. You'll be supporting the school too. Schools receive extra government grants for every child who is claiming Free School Meals. That can be used to pay for more books, computers, special events and much more.

Take your imagination on a food journey

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