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Friday, 27th June 2014

Dear Parents,

Changes to Lunch Arrangements

Background

Many of you may be aware that the Deputy Prime Minister submitted a press release in September 2013 which detailed plans for all infant aged children (Reception, Year 1 and 2) to receive a free school meal every day from September 2014. The statement at the time highlighted that there was evidence that the provision of universal infant free school meals would lead to positive improvements in health, attainment and social cohesion and that it would also help families with the cost of living.

Why do we need to review our arrangements?

On average, our current uptake of school meals is around 35%. In other parts of the country when this scheme has been piloted meal uptake has increased significantly. Whilst we appreciate the positive benefits of this new initiative, it has implications as to how we manage the increase in hot meals.

Review of existing arrangements

A meeting was held in school earlier this month with representatives from the school staff, Cambridge Catering Service and the governing body. It was agreed that we all wanted to improve the lunch experiences for the children and that the introduction of UIFSM was an opportunity to change and improve on our existing arrangements. We intend to trial these new arrangements from Monday, 30th June. A special assembly was held today to share this information with children.

Changes

Essentially, the main changes are:

- 1) Lunchtimes will be carefully organised to create more of a café feel. There will be gradual changes to make the environment more attractive to the children.
- 2) The teachers and I will be more directly involved to ensure a calm and positive transition from lessons to lunch break.
- 3) There will be two sittings for lunch time. These will be rotated on a regular basis.
- 4) A seating plan for both sittings will be introduced. This has been written by class teachers. Friendship groups have been considered as well as special arrangements for slower eaters.
- 5) Each table will have a mixture of year groups. Packed lunches and dinners can sit together.
- 6) The older children at the table will act as "buddies" to support the younger children. This will give the older children greater responsibility and encourage good table manners.
- 7) After the second sitting, all the children will return to the playground/field to play together with their friends.
- 8) The Birthday Table will continue as normal and on days when we have special lunches with invited guests, the seating plan will not apply.

In the Autumn Term we will be inviting feedback on the changes and suggestions for ways in which the lunch experience may be improved even more. In the meantime, we ask for your support and cooperation while these necessary changes are put in place.

Yours sincerely,

Miss A. O'Connor
Headteacher

