

Dear Parent / Guardian

As we approach the end of our summer term and another eventful year, I am sure we are all looking forward to some well-deserved family time and a break from the normal school routine.

The challenges of Covid-19, whilst by no means defeated, seem to be a diminishing memory and we have helped schools return safely to a “business as usual” service pattern and enjoyed seeing our students making use of the food provision, across all catering areas and service times. It has been heartening to see the reintroduction of breakfast clubs, first break services, full lunch offers and the much missed after school menu range.

We must, however, acknowledge the challenging times we all face economically, with inflation rising to 9% and forecasted to reach double figures very soon. We are also witnessing unprecedented hikes in the prices of individual products, like chicken, for example, with poultry increases soon to hit 10%.

The current RPI is sitting at 11.1% and the CPI is 9%, reflecting the challenging economic times we currently live in.

We have spent a significant amount of time working with large MATs, individual clients, consultants and our parents to discuss how we can work together to ensure students, particularly those most vulnerable, have access to a nutritious, hot main meal at all times.

These types of discussion will continue, helping to ensure we have a range of menus to suit all budgets.

At this time of the year we review our tariffs, in preparation for the new academic year in September.

It’s been a particularly challenging piece of analysis this time around, given the volatility of the food market and associated factors which affect costs, such as petrol, for example.

To summarise, we have kept our proposed tariff increases across our range to just below 2% for the next academic year, well less than predicted rate of inflation. Any increase is not an easy decision to take, but I know many of you may have been expecting a larger rise in prices.

Cucina need to balance the difficult challenge of keeping all our staff employed and fairly paid, supplying an impressive range of menus to our students, and meeting our commitments to the school which is why we are doing our absolute best to keep increases to a minimum and are solely

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covering rising costs but, if inflation persists, we will consult with you should a further increase, or other measures, be required.

We will continue with our client forums, Teams calls, in-person meetings and open and honest dialogue with our parental groups to ensure we have a joined up strategic approach for the next 12 months.

We have a difficult period to navigate through but, we will continue to serve food of the highest quality, at the best possible pricing and we give you our undertaking to not alter portion sizes or reduce our menu range!

May I wish you all a lovely summer.

Kindest regards

**Ken Navin**  
**Client Relationship Director**

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