

Children, Young People and Families

School Food Service, Business Strategy
Service Manager : Leah Barratt
Level 7, West Wing
Moorfoot
Sheffield S1 4PL
Tel: 0114 2735175
E-mail: leah.barratt@sheffield.gov.uk
www.sheffield.gov.uk



Date: 4th December 2014

To Headteachers and Chairs of Governors

Of Nursery and Primary schools in the School Catering Contract

Dear Colleague

FORTHCOMING CHANGES TO FOOD LEGISLATION

Food Standards 2015 and Food Information Regulations 2014 (Allergens)

To advise schools about:

- forthcoming legislation and the impact on menu planning
- flexibility within the School Catering Contract and the role of schools
- Quality standards and the Food For Life Partnership Bronze, Silver and Gold Levels

Lead officer: Leah Barratt, Service Manager; Tel: 2735175 or email:
leah.barratt@sheffield.gov.uk

With reference to the above, this letter is to tell you about the upcoming changes to food legislation and to inform you of what action has been taken on your behalf to make sure the school is compliant with the law.

NEW FOOD STANDARDS – in force 1st January 2015

The new standards have been developed as part of the School Food Plan, published in July 2013: www.schoolfoodplan.com. The aim by the School Food Plan Review Group was to make standards simpler and more streamlined, and to remove the nutritional analysis part of menu planning. In doing so, the menus have become more stringent, to ensure that a high level of nutrition is retained and to avoid a return to previous practices where there was a heavy reliance on convenience food with poor nutritional value. You may have noticed some differences in your menus already. The standards **continue to apply** across the whole school day.

Lunchtime - Taylor Shaw have been working on the changes needed for some time, and I can confirm that the current menus already meet the new standards ahead of schedule. The

standards are aimed at making it easier for children to make healthier choices and some of the key changes are set out below:

- Wholegrains must now be included in weekly menus – i.e. wholegrain bread, rice or pasta
- Starchy food cooked in fat is now only available twice instead of three times a week
- There is an increase in non-dairy sources of protein i.e. pulses, Quorn, soya - to reduce the use of cheese as a vegetarian option
- Pastry is restricted to no more than twice a week
- There is an increase in the amount of fruit in the desserts
- Drinking Milk must be available at some part of the school day.

All catering staff have been trained in the new standards and new recipes developed to aid menu planning, including a new wholegrain pizza base. Please see attached a quick guide to the new standards and also a link to the practical guide published by the Children's Food Trust: <http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/standards>

Other than Lunchtime – part of the guide shows where the standards apply to food outside of lunchtime. This includes breakfast clubs, tuck shops, community cafes, after school clubs and any vending machines. Please advise any other provider on your site that these standards apply.

FOOD INFORMATION REGULATIONS 2014 – Allergens

The above regulations come into force on the 13th December 2014 and state that all catering businesses will be required to have systems in place whereby they can provide accurate information to customers in respect of 14 major allergens, including lupin and peanut. The regulations apply to foods sold without packaging or wrapped on site, so food sold in school is included in this new legislation. The top 14 allergens that commonly cause an allergic reaction are:

Cereals (wheat, oats)	Peanuts	Eggs
Fish	Nuts	Soya Beans
Celery	Sesame seeds	Milk
Sulphur Dioxide (gravy mixes, vegetable cooking oil)	Mustard	
<i>Lupin (commonly found in certain types of flour)</i>	<i>Crustaceans, Molluscs</i> Never used in School Meals menus	

Taylor Shaw have been carrying out a major overhaul of their menus and recipes over the last few months and Cook Supervisors and Catering Managers in each school have been trained on the new systems in place. Actions that have been taken so far:

- New recipes are in place that clearly indicate where any of the allergens are present.
- A Customer Information chart that has now been issued to all Primary school kitchens.
- Supplies have been chosen that help Taylor Shaw fully comply with the regulations by making information available on the labelling i.e. bread

- Cascaded training is taking place for other catering staff on-site delivered by Cook Supervisors and Catering Managers up to and including the 12th December.

I have asked that Taylor Shaw supply the Customer Information Chart to all schools so that parents can clearly see their Allergen Policy and I would ask that you display it in your reception area.

Trading Standards will enforce this new area of legislation and it will also form part of the audit process for the School Catering Contract.

FLEXIBILITY IN MENU PLANNING AND THE ROLE OF SCHOOLS

A major objective of the School Catering Contract has been to give schools the flexibility with menus within the legal framework for school food. You are given the core menu to review early in the menu development phase which usually occurs twice a year for the summer and winter menus – for menus post Easter and post October half term. In the current cycle, only 7 schools stayed with the core menu and 110 menus were altered to suit children's tastes. With new legislation imminent, the bespoke nature of menu planning has to be governed more closely and a more streamlined approach taken. Therefore a summer/autumn menu is planned to start after Spring Bank break (June 2015 up to December) and there will be a stricter approach to menu planning. A Menu Selector is being developed so that alternatives to certain dishes can be chosen which keep the integrity of the new food standards and also the allergen requirements in place. These two new pieces of legislation mean that Taylor Shaw have a greater task in maintaining flexibility at the same time as meeting the legal requirements. Menu planning is very resource heavy and takes a long time, as consultation with schools, catering teams and the Council has to be built into the planning process. I would ask that when you are given the core menu you respond promptly with any alterations and then allow the menus to run for a complete cycle before making any changes.

QUALITY IN MENU PLANNING – Food For Life Partnership Bronze Level

It is a requirement of the contract that the Primary core menu meets the Bronze standards set by Food for Life Partnership's catering quality mark. This ensures that there is a limit to pre-prepared foods and a prescribed level of fresh products. The current menu has recently been assessed and has been declared fully compliant with Bronze level criteria by the Food For Life partnership.

It is possible that individual schools may wish their menus to meet Silver and Gold levels. However, the school will have to meet the cost of this level of menu and not as part of the group contract. This is because the Silver and Gold levels introduce organic produce and as such is beyond the current contract charge agreed by the Council and Taylor Shaw. There are no plans to work towards the Silver or Gold levels unless all schools agree that this is what is required of the contract. A new contract charge would then be brokered for schools by the Council. If any school wishes to pursue the Silver or Gold Level then please get in touch with us or Taylor Shaw.

The School Food Service along with Taylor Shaw want the service at your school to be the best it can be, meeting all legal requirements and using high quality ingredients so that pupils are offered a nutritious meal every day. We are happy to hear any suggestions from you as to how to make the meals service improve and we can be contacted on the telephone numbers below or by email.

School Food Service – 2734767 / 35134 or email: schoolfoodservice@sheffield.gov.uk

Taylor Shaw – 2559103 or email: caterers@taylorshaw.com

Yours sincerely



Leah Barratt
Service Manager
School Food Service