



## **FAQ for Parents – School Meals January 2018**

### How is quality of produce controlled?

We provide some local produce in our school meals, this helps support the local community and also cuts down on food miles. Working with the soil association, local food is sourced from the south west or adjoining county.

### Is the food freshly prepared?

- at least 75% of food served on our menu is freshly prepared from scratch on site
- all of our meat is Red Tractor farm assured
- our food is free from additives like aspartame and MSG
- we use a range of organic ingredients supporting a system which works with nature
- menus are designed to make the best use of seasonal ingredients.
- Sausages (from the butchers) and fish fingers (which meet the MSC – ‘Marine Steward Council’ expectations for sustainable food) are the only processed items on the menu.

### Why do we have 2 roasts a week in the winter months?

The school has the option in the winter months to either have 1 roast or 2 roasts a week. Many children like eating roast dinners and it provides a nutritionally balanced hot meal.

### How is salt and sugar content limited in recipes?

We do not add salt into any of our dishes. Guidelines from the ‘School Food Standards’ limits the sugar content in the food we make. Children need a certain amount of sugar in their diet for energy levels.

### Why are there puddings after every meal?

Along with the pudding of the day, children have choice of an organic yoghurt, fresh fruit or cheese and biscuits. In combination with the main course, this provides a balanced diet for the children. Many of the puddings contain 50% fruit. Confectionary is not used (eg in chocolate pudding, chocolate is not used and coco powder is included instead). Puddings are made fresh on site. No puddings are bought in. Fruit option is available daily.

### How are the menus quality assured?

The draft menus are shared with school and catering manager for comment. The catering manager knows the ‘customers’ at Alexander Hosea and what they like/don’t like as much. Some items are changed at this point. The final draft is then reviewed by Health and Wellbeing to check that the balance of food on offer meets the ‘School Food Standards’ and in line with Silver Soil Association expectations. Tweaks are made at this stage before the final menu is published.

### How often is the food fried?

Food standards state that starchy food must not be cooked in oil more than twice a week. With this in mind we only fry the chips on a Friday. All other foods are roasted, steamed etc (eg fish fingers and all day brunch are both oven cooked). By limiting the amount of food that is fried this also reduces the potential for allergen cross-contamination (eg for gluten free)

### How do you cater for dietary needs?

We can cater for all dietary needs – eg vegetarian, vegan, gluten free etc. If your child has a dietary need that you would like to discuss, please contact Deb Thornbury (Kitchen Manager). We would be happy to talk though the menu choices that would be most suitable for your child.

### How are portion sizes determined?

As all children's meals cost the same amount, the portion sizes are served as evenly as possible. We follow recommendations from Integra to give a balanced nutritious meal for children aged 4-11 years. The option of toast and fruit tuck is on offer every day at morning break. Infant children are also provided with free fruit through a national scheme. For children who are 4 years old, fresh milk is provided daily (also through a national scheme). Recently we have started to offer a salad bar in addition to the menu items. This is available for children who would like to add these items to their meal.

For more information follow this link: <http://www.southglos.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools-and-education/school-meals/school-meals/>