

Tuesday 2nd July 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

Since my last letter to you all we have made significant improvements to our catering provision by working closely with our catering providers, Impact Food Group. I am writing to keep you informed of these changes, and to let you know what to expect for the next academic year.

Our staff and students have been participating in the popular Bite Back programme <https://www.biteback2030.com/>. Using feedback from student surveys we have implemented; a wider variety of healthier choices, increased dietary preferences such as vegetarian, vegan, halal and gluten-free, reduced sugar / salt content, introduced hydration stations and improved queuing systems.

The programme has been so well received that one of our students from Sir Henry Floyd Grammar School has been invited to join the Bite Back Youth Board. I must also mention a fantastic initiative from students at The Mandeville School who now host musical lunches with regular live performances to enhance the dining experience! We will continue to listen to feedback and make changes.

In order to sustain the quality, ensure staff are paid the increased national minimum wage and the increased cost of food we have no choice but to now increase our prices. With effect from September 2024 there will be a 2% increase on our current tariff.

We will continue to seek ways to make cost savings, however, we refuse to compromise on the quality of ingredients or much needed staffing levels. We are proud to have fresh, home cooked meals in all of our schools, and continue to provide affordable meal deals in line with free school meals funding. We also offer free porridge every day from 8am and will be launching a new 'PowerBites' range at £1.30 per item to offer a more affordable alternative. Our websites will be updated during the summer holidays with the revised pricing which is also attached to this letter for your information.

You may also remember in my last letter I shared the issue we faced with student accounts running at a deficit which led to a large debt being written-off by the Trust last year. We have been working hard to reduce this overdraft allowance and I wanted to remind you of our approach for the next academic year.

From September 2024 we will be operating a zero-overdraft policy. To avoid anyone going without food, students will be initially refused their food at point of payment and sent to the school office to request a food voucher. The voucher will allow them to have a £3 Blue Dot meal only. Parents will be contacted and asked to top-up their child's account immediately and the cost of this lunch will be deducted from the student's account as soon as funds are received.




This will be communicated to new students as part of their welcome pack and will apply to ALL current students, including Pupil Premium if they chose to spend over their allocated daily allowance, parents still have the option to top-up.

All families have the choice for their child to use either our award-winning in-house catering or to provide food from home. If you choose to use school catering, you will also have access to the online facility to top-up your child's payment account. If you are unsure on how to make top-up payments for food, please contact your school's admin office for details. Please keep a proactive eye on your account balances and make regular top-ups.

For any students who are leaving at the end of this academic year, please ensure all available credit is utilised before they leave. Whilst we can issue refunds for student accounts in credit, our payments systems and reconciliation process mean we will be unable transfer any credits owed until December 2024.

Thank you for your ongoing support to drive improvements across our Trust for the benefit of all.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature appears to read 'Jemma Arnold-Gunning' in a cursive style.

Jemma Arnold-Gunning
COO Insignis Academy Trust