



ABBOT'S LEA SCHOOL

Headteacher: Mrs Ania Hildrey, FCCT, B.Ed(Hons), M.Ed, NPQH, NPQEL



24 March 2026

Dear Families,

Re: New Lunch Menu Launch

We are delighted to share that, from the start of Term 5 (13 April 2026), we will be launching a new lunch menu.

The lunch menu will be changed following consultation with students, feedback from staff and analysis of foods in highest demand and also food waste.

Our aim is to support as many students as possible to enjoy healthy, balanced school meals in a way that feels comfortable and accessible to them, and we are mindful that some of our students have very specific preferences or diagnosed sensory processing difficulties that restrict their enjoyment, or even acceptance of certain food or food presentation.

To support those diverse sensory and individual preferences, menu items will be served separately where possible, for example, pasta and sauce will be provided individually rather than pre-mixed. This approach allows students to combine foods in a way that suits their needs.

In addition to the daily menu, wraps, jacket potatoes and sandwich options will also be available.

From 13 April 2026, classrooms will complete a daily lunch register, during which students will be supported to indicate whether they would like a hot lunch option, cold lunch option or a packed lunch.

Menus will be clearly labelled by week and date, shared in my Head's Weekly Newsletter.

Please note that due to the unmanageable volume of personalised requests and the impact such personalisation has on the product costs and staff' worktime, we will no longer be able to provide daily individual food requests such as specific items like chips, nuggets, sausages or prescribed branded foods.

This change is necessary not only due to the unmanageable operational pressures, but also due to updated national allergy guidance and the requirement for schools to follow the Food for Thought healthy eating standards.

Students will therefore need to choose from the school menu or, if the menu does not provide the specific personal preference, they will be able to bring it with them, in line with family preferences, as a packed lunch from home.

This change does not apply to students with medically confirmed diagnosis of food allergies or specific eating needs such as ARFID, or specialised medically prescribed diet, who will continue to receive approved alternative food provision.

If you are unsure whether this applies to your child, please contact:

- Mrs Cartwright (Assistant Headteacher – Primary Department):
primary@abbotsleaschool.co.uk
- Mr Mason (Assistant Headteacher – Secondary Department):
secondary@abbotsleaschool.co.uk

The cost of a school lunch is £1.80 per day (£9.00 per week), and payments can be made via Arbor. We will send separate instructions shortly to show you how to top up your child's school dinner account.

Students in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are entitled to Universal Free School Meals (UFSM), which means that they can receive a school lunch at no cost. If your child is in one of these year groups, no payment will be required for their meals.

Please note that Free School Meals can only be provided once eligibility has been confirmed, and no free school meals will be issued without a valid FSM eligibility confirmation.

We therefore encourage all families to check eligibility for Free School Meals, as this can provide further support to your family and support school's catering operation. Families can check their eligibility for Free School Meals themselves via the LGfL eligibility checker [Home | LGfL FSM](#)

If you are unable to do this, the school office staff will be happy to check on your behalf (please contact: reception@abbotsleaschool.co.uk)

If a child arrives at school without a packed lunch, we will assume that a school meal is required for that day, and your child's Arbor account will be charged £1.80 (unless, of course, your child is eligible for UFSM or Free School Meals).

We understand that changes to food routines can be significant for some students and are committed to making this transition as smooth as possible.

We hope that you will welcome this change of practice, which takes our students' food preference feedback into account, and that together we will see an increase in school meals uptake, a reduction in food waste, and very crucially – an even greater satisfaction with the food served by our Chef and the Catering Team, who work tirelessly to help our young people eat a healthy, balanced, and yet – accessible, diet.

Thank you in advance for your support.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs Hildrey
Headteacher