

Dear Parents and Carers,

We would like to take this opportunity to let you know of changes taking place to the school's catering provision.

There has been an increase in the number of children choosing to have school dinners and we are delighted to have received very positive feedback from students, staff and visitors about the food provided from our new catering provider AIP - we would of course welcome any further feedback on this provision.

However, we have reached a situation where a number of children have accrued quite significant overdue payments for the lunches, snacks/drinks that they have ordered. Despite a number of payment requests to parents/carers, there are still many accounts which have accrued debts. In view of this, we are no longer able to operate as we have been.

As we have to pay a provider for each meal served, the school receives a charge for the meals/snacks not paid for, and until we receive payment, this will have a detrimental impact on the school budgets designed to support other areas. Therefore, we are introducing a system whereby your child will not be permitted to exceed **£5.00** in overdue payments.

If you owe more than this, you will need to clear the debt promptly before your child is able to order school snacks/drinks or lunches again. Until this time, you will need to provide your child with a packed lunch or snacks. I would also take this opportunity to remind you that snacks are not included as part of your free school meal provision and must be paid for via ParentPay.

We are aware how hectic life can be, so we think that £5.00 is a fair compromise as it gives the opportunity to have a meal before your child will not be able to order any further food from the canteen.

You will need to check your ParentPay account to ensure that there is sufficient money to pay for your child's lunch as we would like to avoid a situation whereby children are arriving at the serving hatch expecting a meal which has not been paid for. Should this situation arise, we will contact you, so that money can be added to your account immediately. This is not a situation I would like to find students or staff encountering, so it is really important that you are aware of your ParentPay balance at all times. We will continue to send out reminders to parents/carers. Your support in this matter is really appreciated.

Recent national surveys based on the dietary quality of school meals and packed lunches concluded that the cost of packed lunches have risen by 70% in a year, and that children consuming school meals were more likely to meet minimum recommendations for vegetables, protein rich foods, and fibre, and not exceed maximum recommendations for salt and sweet snacks by having school meals. With the ever-increasing food index price, we feel that the offer for school lunches at Perton Middle is still a good deal for our families.

Implementing a limit is always a tough decision, but one we could ultimately not hold back any longer due to the amounts owed. This will not impact free school meal provision.



# SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE Learning Partnership

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If you would like to apply for free school meals, please go to the Staffordshire.gov website and check if you're eligible. After completing an application, you can screenshot a copy of the confirmation and provide this to us so the free school meals can start immediately.

<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Education/Educational-awards-benefits/FreeSchoolMeals/Apply-online.aspx>

This revised system will activate from Monday 24<sup>th</sup> June, 2024, and we would strongly urge anyone with overdue payments to clear their account.

If you need further support or advice, or are concerned about this decision, please do not hesitate to contact school for information.

Yours Sincerely

Mrs M. Burrington  
Headteacher  
Perton Middle School

