



ST. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

"Let all that you do be done in love." 1 Corinthians 16:14

Dear Parents/Carers,

13th March 2026

SCHOOL DINNER MENUS – SUMMER TERM 2026

It's that time again!! The new school dinner menus have now arrived and I have great pleasure in sending you the new details and information which will be on offer after the October half term. You will see we have a new 3-week rolling menu which have been carefully chosen to ensure that some old favourites remain but at the same time introducing some new recipes and combinations to 'tickle your taste buds!' As always, I am indebted to our fantastic catering team led by Mrs Turner (Catering Manager) and our dedicated team of Midday Assistants who oversee this very busy period of the school day. I am sure you will join me in thanking them for their hard work, care and support.

The new menus will commence on **Monday 13th April 2026.**

The menus are planned in consultation with the School Meals Advisory Service, ensuring that each week's menu meets the required national food standards. Allergen information is available from the School Office upon request.

Together with this letter you will receive **two copies** of the three-week menu plan – one for you to keep for your information and one to be returned to school, indicating your child's menu choices for each day of the three-week cycle. As you will see, there is a delicious range of meals planned with a main option and a vegetarian option for each day. Please look at these menus with your children – there are lots of tasty dishes to discuss and try!

Please return **one** menu plan, marked to show whether your child wants the main or vegetarian option on each day. **If you do not return a menu plan, we will assume you are providing your child with their own packed lunch each day.** The following points should be considered when signing up for school dinners:

- School meals for KS2 children **MUST** be paid for via our online payments system 'ParentPay' (www.parentpay.com). We no longer accept cash/cheque payments made through the School Office and paying via ParentPay will greatly assist us in this. It is also easier for you to manage your payments.
- The cost of school dinners for 5 days is now **£13.45** (£2.69 per day) and we would encourage you to manage your payments through ParentPay so you are always in credit. The minimum payment on the ParentPay system is £13.45 but you are able to pay any amount you wish above this level. We cannot allow parents to fall into arrears and school meals must be paid for **before** they are taken.
- If you are entitled to Free School Meals (FSM) you will not need to pay via ParentPay and the school has a list of children currently in receipt of FSM. If you think you may be entitled to free school meals please read the entitlement information contained in this letter, visit the school website or speak to a member of the School Office staff.
- The new menus will begin on **Monday 13th April 2026** and continue on a 3 week rolling cycle. We will repeat your child's menu choices unless you inform us otherwise **in writing**.
- EYFS and KS1 children **DO NOT** need to pay for school meals as they are currently funded by the Government.

In preparation for the start of these new menus, please ensure that your completed menu plan is returned to school by the morning of **Friday 20th March** at the very latest, in order that we can place orders for the correct quantities of food.

A Christian community where children are known by name and loved, which empowers them to learn and to grow in faith, knowledge and fellowship.

Sawyers Hall Lane, Brentwood, Essex CM15 9BX

Telephone: 01277 223651 admin@stthomaspri.essex.sch.uk www.stthomaspri.org

Headteacher: Mr D. M. Moran





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If your child has particular allergies or dietary requirements, we should be able to meet these. It may be advisable to speak to the Catering Manager (Mrs Turner) before signing up and an appointment to meet with her can be made via the School Office. I would like to point out that our kitchen is a nut free environment.

Who is eligible for free school meals?

Free school meals are available to pupils in receipt of, or whose parents are in receipt of, one or more of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit (provided you have an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400, as assessed by earnings from up to three of your most recent assessment periods)
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guarantee element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit

In addition, the following pupils will be protected against losing their free school meals:

- Since 1 April 2018, all existing free school meals claimants have continued to receive free school meals whilst Universal Credit is rolled out. This applies regardless of any change in household circumstances, including if their earnings rise above the threshold during that time. Protections will remain in place until the end of the 2025/26 school year.
- From the start of the 2026/27 school year, the Department for Education will extend entitlement to free school meals to include all children from households in receipt of Universal Credit. It is our intention to end transitional protections alongside this change in threshold, with eligibility for all pupils reverting to whether they meet the eligibility criteria, regardless of whether they were previously protected. We will issue further guidance ahead of September 2026.

A pupil is only eligible to receive a free school meal when a claim for the meal has been made on their behalf and their eligibility, or protected status, has been verified by the school where they are enrolled or by the local authority.

We are all very excited to be sharing these new menus with you and hope you and your children are looking forward to it too! Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Dean Moran
Headteacher

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