

**Kate Evans**  
Head of County Catering Service

Children's Services  
County Hall, Stable Block  
Matlock  
Derbyshire  
DE4 3AG

To all Schools that trade with  
Derbyshire Catering Service

Telephone  
Email catering@derbyshire.gov.uk  
Ask for  
Our ref KE/MM/KE68  
Your ref  
Date 11 July 2023

Dear Colleague

### **Derbyshire Catering Service**

Derbyshire Catering Service has reluctantly made the difficult decision to increase the charge to schools for a paid school meal. This decision has been taken in the face of rising costs, and to avoid considerable losses by the Authority, which in turn would affect the viability of the service moving forward. The increase will affect parents and carers who pay for school meals.

Like other local authorities across the country, the council's school catering service has been significantly affected by inflation and other factors driving up the cost of food and staffing. Due to statutory changes to wages, staffing costs for the service increased by more than £1.2 million in April 2022.

Therefore, I am writing to inform you that the value of a secondary free school meal is to be set at £3.55 from 1 September 2023, and arrangements will need to be made by school to reflect this value within your cashless system. The cost charged to School by the Catering Service will be £2.90 from 1 September 2023.

- Secondary Free Meal Value - £3.55
- Secondary Free Meal Charge to School - £2.90
- Adult Paid Meal - £4.26 (inclusive of VAT)

During the next couple of weeks, we will contact you to make arrangements for your tariff boards to be updated in preparation for the new term.

I would like to reassure you that Derbyshire Catering Service is committed to pricing meals to only cover costs, without making a profit (as required by legislation) and will continue to offer a healthy and balanced two-course hot meal.

While ongoing efforts are made to keep costs low, we will not compromise the nutritional quality or portion size of meals. We recognise that doing so would adversely affect children, particularly those from low-income households who rely on our hot meals. We also want to make sure we can recruit and retain dedicated catering staff at schools.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and I look forward to working with you as your catering provider for the years to come.

If you have any queries regarding our service or we can be of any further assistance, please don't hesitate to contact me by email on:

[catering@derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:catering@derbyshire.gov.uk)

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kate Evans', with a small flourish at the end.

Kate Evans  
Head of County Catering Service