

## School Lunches

### Parent Meeting: questions

Questions were taken throughout the meeting, collected and have been answered below. If you have any more questions, feedback or suggestions regarding our lunches, please send them to [admin@gayhurst.hackney.sch.uk](mailto:admin@gayhurst.hackney.sch.uk)

Are there ways we could help mirror/ support eating at home to build more synergy with the children's school experience?

Introducing the children to ingredients that they may be unfamiliar in the home environment could help – e.g., if you know that your child is not familiar with sweet potato and it is coming up on the following weeks menu, you could include sweet potato in a meal for your child at home. If children can recognise the foods they are served, they gain confidence in eating them.

Encouraging dialogue with children about food is beneficial, e.g., developing a child's ability to use words to describe why they did not like something they ate.

Reinforcing the idea with children at home that taste preferences are fluid. They may not have enjoyed a certain food when they tried it in the past. However, if they tried it again, they may find that they liked it.

Is there anything parents can do for the school to support what you are doing? Fundraising or offering our time. Fundraising is always welcome and joining CoGs (PTA) is the best way to do this. As we return to normal life with fairs, pop ups and BBQ's we will get in touch.

When/ how are the children told what is for lunch?

We email the school menu out to parents and carers on a weekly basis and it goes onto our school website and can be found at the bottom of this page as a weekly PDF:

<https://www.gayhurst.hackney.sch.uk/page/?title=Lunch&pid=50>

We have also just started to share the menus in class on a Friday. The class will get the chance to give feedback through an online form and then look at the menu for the week ahead.

Where possible teachers of younger classes will share just before going into the lunch hall what is for lunch that day.

How long do they stay in the lunch hall?

This is dependent on age. Usually 20 minutes.

Do they go out to play when they are done or all together?

All children play before or after lunch and they can do this once they have finished eating.

Love the idea of parents joining the children in the lunch hall.

Great – we will organise a sign-up sessions.

Do the kids get snacks during the day?

Reception, Year 1 and 2 children have fruit provided at playtimes.

Do the kids get a bit of everything?

We encourage the children to try a main dish and sides.

What happens to the kids who don't eat or get distracted?

The lunch hall is heavily staffed so that children are reminded to eat as they talk with friends and staff.

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Do you use refined oils for cooking with?

Extra virgin olive oil is used for the majority of cooking at Gayhurst, which is an unrefined oil.

How often do you cook with wholegrains rather than white or refined?

Our breads and cakes use either 100% whole grain flour or a blend of wholegrain and refined flours. Another wholegrain to feature often on our menu rotation is bulgur wheat.

How can we know if the food is halal?

All meat served at Gayhurst is purchased from a single manufacturing company. We obtain a halal certificate from this manufacturer annually this can be viewed on our website. Gayhurst kitchen does not use any products containing pork or alcohol or other non-halal ingredients.

Why are the portions of the food the kids like so small, especially the protein e.g. 2 tiny slices of mozzarella?

We follow the Portion Tables from the School Food Standards published by the Government.

Why are some children getting special portions of plain food e.g. plain pasta not available to all?

The tasting plate is available to all children which is composed of a variety of easily enjoyed foods. This is a new innovation to help children who don't like choice 1 or 2.

Why is the food so complicated?

We balance the menu to offer a wide range of food and cooking styles.

The meals served are part of the food education curriculum, which introduces children to new flavours and ingredients.

Why are children coming home hungry?

Lunch is served to the children in the middle of their school day. After they have eaten, the children play before returning to their classrooms. The children expend a considerable amount of energy during their afternoon schedule, meaning most are ready for a snack at the end of the school day.

Why are children forced to eat the food before they play?

We want to ensure that none of our children go home hungry, so we do encourage them to eat before going out to play. Children aren't forced to eat but they are encouraged and they are offered the alternative tasting plate if they have not eaten much.

Why does the food sometimes run out?

Food is available in abundance daily and no child goes without a full lunch offer

Why not plain bread instead of bread with seeds?

We serve a variety of bread, more often than not the bread is without seeds.

Why aren't the staff eating with the kids?

Our lunch hall has a high number of staff eating with the children in comparison to other schools this is because all staff are offered a free meal if they eat with the children. This is optional however and if staff prefer to eat away from the hall, they can pay for their lunches some staff work through lunches in other roles and therefore eat at their desks.

How much calcium is within your meals?

We ensure that a variety of calcium rich foods are included on our menus.

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**Feedback:**

My child loves school lunches. I thought the food was good too but wonder whether the vegetables could be less cooked

**Suggestions:**

- Celery sticks cut into three sections and filled with Boursin cheese
- Could we have a School of Food cookbook?