



## **Universal Infant Free School Meals & Chartwells Frequently Asked Questions**

*This is a live document and will be updated as more information becomes available.*

### **1. What is Universal Infant Free School Meals?**

The Children and Families Act places a legal duty on state-funded schools in England, including academies and free schools, to offer a free lunch to all pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. This duty came into force from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014.

In Poole, this has resulted in a three-fold increase in the requirement for meals in primary phase schools.

### **2. How were suppliers chosen?**

Borough of Poole officers have worked with schools and suppliers over the past year to develop and implement a strategy for the supply of the school meals service which meets schools' agreed priorities that it should be locally prepared, provide choice and quality meals.

Schools entered into contracts with their chosen suppliers. These are:

- Two secondary schools (Carter Community School, Poole Grammar School)
- Three local catering businesses (Forerunner, Renowned Catering and Star Cuisine)
- The Dorset County Council corporate contract, awarded to Chartwells.

### **3. What is the current situation for hot school meal provision in Poole?**

For 20 schools, the meal service has been delivered as agreed via a range of local suppliers and the system is working well.

One supplier, Chartwells, has had severe difficulty in meeting the increased demand, resulting in a number of schools not receiving meals on time or to the quality expected. Chartwells will deliver cold packed lunches until the issues with quality and delivery are resolved.

### **4. Which schools in Poole are contracted to Chartwells?**

12 Poole schools chose Chartwells (trading as The Schools Creative Kitchen) as their school meal supplier.

The following 11 schools are contracted to them through the Dorset County Council (DCC) corporate contract:

- Bearwood Primary and Nursery School
- Bishop Aldhelm's CE VA Primary School
- Branksome Heath Junior School
- Broadstone First School
- Heatherlands Primary School
- Hillbourne Primary School
- Merley First School
- Oakdale Junior School
- Sylvan Infant School
- Talbot Primary School
- Twin Sails Infant School

Broadstone Middle School has contracted direct with Chartwells outside of the DCC contract.

**5. Hot meals were delivered to my school last week with no problems. Why were they taken away?**

Chartwells has taken the decision to withdraw its 'delivered-in hot' meal service from all schools with immediate effect. Cold packed lunches will be delivered until the issues with quality and delivery are resolved for all the schools they are contracted to.

This decision affects all the schools listed in Question 4, with the exception of Talbot Primary School where meals are delivered cold and heated on site.

**6. When will Chartwells be able to provide hot school meals?**

Chartwells have confirmed that the hot meals service will resume after October half term.

**7. I have paid for my older children to have hot meals. Will I be reimbursed?**

Chartwells have confirmed in a letter to parents that they will reimburse parents who have paid for hot school meals.

**8. What happens now?**

The Borough of Poole will maintain daily contact with Chartwells and the other affected authorities until the issues are resolved. Chartwells will keep parents updated via schools.