



# Fresh Ideas Feeding Minds

## Special Diets are Changing!

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Our school food ethos is, and has always been, to feed **all** children tasty and nutritious meals that can help enhance their learning, health, happiness, and wellbeing during the school day.

Special diets form a significant part of our catering provision, and we understand that when a young person has an allergy, intolerance, or medical condition, coming to school and feeling safe to eat a school lunch can feel overwhelming.

We currently have a special diet policy, registration form and wide range of allergen aware menus in place across our schools. As a responsible school meal provider, we regularly review our policy and practices and, following a recent audit from an external school meal nutritionist and our own industry research, we are pleased to introduce our new **Allergen Aware Menu**.

### New Allergen Aware Menu

Our new Allergen Aware Menu will replace any individual special diet menus previously created for any of the top 14 legal allergens\*. **This means that any child registered with us with an allergy or intolerance to any of the top 14 allergens will be on the same menu.**

It is important for us to highlight that the Allergen Aware Menu will be closely aligned to the Primary School Main Menu so children who require it can feel safe and included.

As you will see when the menu is released, the changes made to dishes will be demonstrated in a purple font. There are two or three choices daily. In addition, we are pleased to offer schools an Allergen Aware Packed Lunch Menu (please check with your school if this is available).

*\*The top 14 allergens are: dairy, egg, gluten, soya, nuts, peanuts, sesame seeds, fish, celery, mustard, lupin, crustaceans, sulphur dioxide, molluscs.*





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## Other Allergies or Medical Conditions

We understand that some children have allergies or intolerances to other ingredients that are outside of the top 14 allergens or have medical conditions that affect their diet, and our new Allergen Aware Menu would not be suitable. In this instance, we will continue to provide a bespoke special diet menu free from the unsuitable ingredient(s). As always, we can only provide suitable menus when we have completed registration forms with medical evidence.

## Start Date

Our Allergen Aware Menu will be launched to coincide with our new Autumn/Winter Menu 2023-24 which starts after October half-term **w/c 30<sup>th</sup> October**.

## Benefits

We understand this is a change but there are many benefits:

- Improved safety for children with allergies, intolerances, or medical conditions
- More inclusive lunchtime experience
- Reduced risk of cross-contamination
- Reduced pressure on the kitchen team (especially in a school with multiple dietary requirements)
- More streamlined process for school office
- Reassurance for parents or guardians

We hope this update has been informative and helpful, especially to parents or guardians of children who require special diets. We cannot stress enough how important it is for us to be able to feed **all** children our tasty and nutritious school lunches as **safely as possible**.

We have created a frequently asked question sheet, but should you have any further queries, please contact us via email [catering.admin@norsegroup.co.uk](mailto:catering.admin@norsegroup.co.uk).

Warm wishes,

Norse Catering

