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Headteacher Lynn Harrison

Thursday 23rd March 2023

Dear Parents

I regret to inform you that there will be another increase to the daily meal price, which is being introduced after the Easter break. The new meal price will be £3.34, this is an increase of 37p per day per meal.

Whilst we fully expected an increase to take place again this April, we were surprised by the amount that has been decided on by Orian and have corresponded with them at length, as well as holding meetings to raise our objections and concerns. Despite our best efforts to negotiate a lower price with Orian they are refusing to offer any compromise by way of a lesser price increase, unless we are able to increase the number of meals bought per day. However, we are fully aware of the cost of living crisis and such an increase in meal price is unlikely to encourage more pupils to take a school meal.

Unfortunately, we are not able to subsidise the price increase from the school budget because, based on this new price, we will already be running the provision of school meals at a significant loss. The government provides free school meals for all pupils in Reception to Year 2 (plus pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium), however, the government only pays schools £2.41 per day per eligible pupil and consequently, in providing meals for these pupils, we will be losing 93p per day for each of those children. We estimate this will result in a loss of £6,000 next year alone. That said, if there is anyone who would like their child to have a school meal but are struggling with the costs please contact the office in the first instance.

We continue to work with Orian to ensure that the meals provided by them are of the highest quality possible and are just as disappointed as you are bound to be by this situation. Hopefully, the new menus, which have just started, are more appealing and the menus will change again in October. We have a coronation themed day planned in early May, which we hope the children will enjoy.

On a separate note, we have our next Great North Air Ambulance Clothing Collection coming up in a few weeks. This will take place on the weekend of **Sunday 23rd April/Monday 24th April**.

On **Sunday 23rd April** there will be a doorstep collection around Irthington and the surrounding villages of Newtown, Newby East, Laversdale and Old Wall. Bags can be left outside by 10am that day for collection. On **Monday 24th April** there will be a schoolyard collection. Bags can be left here from Sunday 23rd April up until 9am on the Monday morning.

Each year we hold two collections, the first in November and the second in April, which are organised through the PTA. The children are being sent home this week with air ambulance bags, which can be filled with any unwanted clothing, towels, sheets, bedding, pairs of shoes, bags, belts. They also accept mobile phones and used cartridges, these must be donated in a separate bag. Please do not include any bric-a-brac (toys/books/household goods). Items can also be donated in non-Air Ambulance bags.

The PTA will be distributing Air Ambulance bags around the local villages in the next couple of weeks and will be collecting the filled bags up on Sunday 24th April to deliver them to the schoolyard. If you are able to assist with either the distribution or the collection of the bags please speak to Jess Storey, PTA Chair.

Yours sincerely
Lynne Harrison