



# Powell Corderoy Parent Council

Summer Term 2015



# UPDATE

Thank you to everyone who came to the Parent Council Meeting on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> April. It was a very interesting and positive meeting. As school lunches is the HOT TOPIC at the moment we thought we would bring parents an update on what was discussed and the schools responses to parents concerns. All who attended came away feeling that their questions and concerns had been fully answered by Miss Hendy and the lunchtime supervisors, Mrs Maccarone and Mrs Larn, and assured that the school is doing everything they can to encourage healthy eating at Powell and the children are well fed so they can concentrate during lessons in the afternoon..



The school recently implemented a new policy to encourage children to eat their main course before being allowed pudding. This was in response to concerns about how many children were throwing away most of their lunch every day and going without food.

## SCHOOL LUNCHES

### Parents' Comments:

*These comments are from during the meeting or from the communication sheets filled in after the meeting.*

- Lunches – Sounds like work in progress.
- Good idea as a long term approach to dinners BUT younger ones especially need to be reminded they can also have fruit/salad if they don't want/like what is on their plates.
- Want lunch to be a positive experience.
- Encourage parents to move to packed lunches if their children really do not eat/ enjoy the food.
- It is hard for the little ones to communicate and negotiate their needs/wants at the best of times; they need more support in the school hall.

*These comments came via email prior to the meeting from parents who did not attend the meeting.*

- Puddings too healthy – supposed to be naughty.
- Lunches described as horrible from a non fussy eater.
- Will not return to school dinners until there is a new contractor in place or assurance of better quality.
- If food is good the approach is fine.
- Motivate fussy eaters to get through their mains. As long as it's not too long and time restrictive and holding/ reducing their playtime.
- If the food is poor they will go without their puddings.
- "Forcing" children to eat.
- Common sense parents know best policy.
- Why finish everything? If tried and don't like then don't force.
- If child eats a fair amount of main course they should be allowed to have pudding so they at least have something in their tummy.
- Menu is too complex.
- It's the same rule as at home.



### Parents' Comments: (continued)

- School dinners need a re-vamp!
- Some children are eating things they wouldn't normally eat at home – so very positive.
- Packed lunches – should be guidelines on what is permitted. Also filters into break time snacking. Some will take out of their packed lunches (savouries or cake) and some stick to the fruit rule.
- Packed lunches – microwave for heating lunches?
- Packed lunches – is consumption monitored in the same way?
- Packed lunches – children are let out earlier than those on dinners.

### School & Governing Body Comments:



We noticed that some children were throwing away nearly a full plate of food, only eating a few mouthfuls or just having a pudding. This resulted in the school throwing away 2-3 full bins of food every

lunchtime. The lunchtime supervisors were becoming increasingly concerned, and Miss Taylor had reported that some children were hungry in the afternoons so she'd had to introduce a second fruit break. We then had an external audit from the Head of Catering from Surrey Commercial Services, who was equally concerned about the children's eating habits - especially that almost none of the children were eating vegetables even when encouraged.

Following on from the audit and the advice we received, we have introduced smaller portions, so the amount doesn't look overwhelming and unmanageable to the children, however children can get seconds if they wish or Juniors can ask for a larger portion when the food is served. Children choose which vegetables they would like from those on offer that day:

## School & Governing Body Comments:



If the children do not like the cooked vegetables on offer they can choose from the salad bar, which includes dried fruit and bread.

We can assure parents that children are not being 'forced' to eat things they don't like but are being encouraged to try new things

in a positive way. If a child really won't eat the food on offer and has not had enough to eat, they can go to the salad bar and have as much bread, salad and fruit as they wish instead. Children are expected to eat their main course before they are allowed pudding or are allowed out to play - this has meant that most children are now eating a full meal, including vegetables.

We have also introduced a new system where the children choose which meal they would like at morning registration e.g. main meal or vegetarian alternative, e.g. a jacket potato. This means the kitchen can cook the right amount of each option and doesn't run out of one choice.

Since introducing this new system we are now throwing away less than half a bin of food per day and have noticed a big improvement in behaviour and concentration for a lot of our children in the afternoon. This new system will take some getting used to, especially for our older children, but we are finding the process easier and easier every day.

We are aware that the menu in general needs to be improved and we are working with Surrey Commercial Services to address this. A meeting has been arranged with the Head of Catering and we will be coming up with a new menu that comes within budget and is in-keeping with strict nutritional guidelines. More on this in today's Headlines.

A question was raised at the Parent Council meeting as to whether we are also checking those children that bring in packed lunch in the same way as those who have school dinners and the answer is yes. Children have to eat their sandwiches/pasta etc. and fruit before they are allowed to go out to play, they cannot just eat their crisps or pudding.

Children who have packed lunch are not allowed out earlier than those who have school dinners, however because they don't have to queue for their food and their food is cold, they do often finish sooner. Any ideas on how to solve this are welcome!

With regard to the comment about having a microwave, this could be tricky given the number of children but we will take it back to the staff to think about.

We were also asked if we had any guidelines on what can and what can't be included in packed lunches. We ask that children do not bring in fizzy drinks, sweets, nuts or products containing nuts. If you would like some healthy lunchbox ideas please visit <http://www.nhs.uk/Change4Life/Pages/healthy-lunchbox-picnic.aspx> or <http://www.healthylunch.org.uk/>



Alex Cliff, the Chair of Governors and Wendy Reed, the Vice Chair visited the school this week to have school lunch with the children. They both enjoyed their lunch and felt that the quality of the food is very good. This supports the schools view that it is the range and menu not the quality which is the issue. Please see today's Headlines for an update from Miss Hendy on the planned improvements to the menu.

**Please Remember** *The Parent Council is an excellent forum for parents to come and share ideas and put forward their views to the Head Teacher and the governing body, but the Parent Council is not a decision making body – its role is consultative and advisory. Although all matters will be considered by the school and the governing body, they remain the decision-makers.*

## How you can get in contact with the Parent Council:

Speak to your class representative or any member of the Parent Council Team. Leave your comments in the Parent Council box in the school reception.

*The Parent Council Team*



If you would like to join the Parent Council Team please complete the form below and hand it to a member of the team or the school office. Thank you!

I would like to join the team as (please tick):

<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Class Representative</b>
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Name

Childs name and class (Sept 2014)

Email address (this is for use by the PC only):

Comments or suggestions, including anything you would like to discuss in the future:

