

Dear Parent/Guardian

We have gained a well-deserved reputation for never compromising on quality, portion size, choice or value, which is why we are proud to be serving so many students across the country.

The challenges we're seeing in our kitchens are the same as those you're likely experiencing at home. Ingredient prices are rocketing, and energy costs are sky high. Additionally, we're funding important wage increases for our teams. Here's some background information that we would like to share with you.

### **Food Inflation is at 16.5%**

As is the case for supermarkets and restaurants across the UK, we're seeing near weekly increases in the prices of food and drink. Supply volumes have dropped, due to factors such as the invasion of Ukraine, bird flu, swine fever and extreme weather internationally, driving prices up. We're working closely with our chefs and supply partners to introduce new products and dishes, but these mitigations have limits.

### **Staff Wage Increases**

The Government has increased the minimum wage by 9.7%. This is a positive move that will mean our teams are better able to address the cost pressures they are under. It is 3% higher than last year's record rise, which is great progress, but does subsequently create funding pressures.

We have absorbed some of the cost increases and continue to seek further efficiencies, however, we need to implement a **tariff increase of 6.6% from September 2023**. This is a below inflation increase, which will allow us to maintain quality services and support our catering teams. The situation is far from ideal, we would like as many students to enjoy our services as possible and we appreciate price increases make this harder, particularly when many families are feeling the effects of high interest mortgages and the general cost of living crisis. That said, we believe our food continues to offer excellent value for money.

As always, thank you for your support and understanding. We will continue to partner with schools, students and parents to explore new approaches and gain input and feedback as we navigate this challenging period. If you have any thoughts you would like to share with us, please get in touch – we'd love to hear from you.

Kindest regards

**Ken Navin**

**Client Relationship Director**

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