

CATERING POLICY AND PRACTICE

Menu Planning

Menus are planned by the Catering Manager, who is formally trained in nutritional matters, on a monthly cycle. While regard is given to comments emanating from House Food Committees (see below), the content is based mainly on guidelines issued in the Food Standards Agency's publication "The Balance of Good Health" and the "Five a Day" campaign. In January 2015, the Borough Council's Schools' Dietician visited the School and inspected the menus and food served. In consequence, the School was awarded the Borough Council's healthy eating award at Gold Standard (the highest available) for promoting healthy eating. Menus are designed to provide a varied "fruit and vegetable" content in addition to protein and carbohydrate: they are balanced on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. A broad spectrum of dietary requirements is catered for including nut allergies, egg and gluten free meals, and for those with severe lactose intolerance. Salad bars are available together with a vegetarian option.

Local Sourcing

For reasons of conservation, it is our policy to source food locally whenever continuity and quality of supply can be guaranteed at competitive prices. All of our food suppliers are based in Kent, Sussex or London.

Food Quantities

For the main meal of the day, we provide a minimum of 110 grams of meat/fish per boy and 110 grams of potato, with 75 grams of vegetable. For pasta and rice we allow 100 grams. These quantities accord with standard government guidelines and are in keeping with the nutritional advice from the bodies listed above. We allow 90 pieces of fruit per day per House (more if the House requires it). A minimum of a pint of milk per boy per House is provided daily with unlimited breakfast cereals. We employ our own butcher and baker to help keep the standard of these products high on the most cost-effective basis. In addition, all Boarding House "brew rooms" are provided with milk, bread, butter, jams and spreads and, where sought, cheese for consumption at any time within the day or evening.

Staff Training and Supervision

All House Head Cooks are trained to NVQ level 2 with such training being extended to Assistant Cooks, several of whom already hold that qualification. All Catering staff are fully trained and qualified in food hygiene matters. The House Head Cook is the first level of supervision maintaining daily contact with the Catering Office. The Catering Manager or the Deputy Catering Manager visits every kitchen regularly during both lunch and evening meals when specific checks are undertaken (e.g. temperature of food, record keeping, and staffing issues). These checks are fully documented and are independently checked every 18 months by the Local Authority Environmental Health Officer (EHO). There is always a Duty Manager available from 7a.m. to 7p.m., 7 days a week who is immediately contactable by mobile 'phone and thus able to deal with any situation which arises. Head and Assistant Cooks meet on a regular basis to discuss issues and share good practice.

External Monitoring

The School is subject to routine checks by the EHO. In consequence of these inspections all 9 School kitchens now hold Five Star ratings. They are awarded for standards that exceed the legal requirement

for hygiene training, safe food systems, standards of cleanliness and the condition of the plant and premises. In this latter context, in recent years, sums in excess of £1m have been spent in modernising and improving House kitchens and their associated areas.

House Dining

Tonbridge believes strongly in maintaining its tradition of House dining with its attendant social benefits. This requires significant investment, particularly in the provision of staff and plant, but is greatly appreciated by boys, Housemasters and the vast majority of parents. While this practice will inevitably restrict menu selections, the Housemaster is able to monitor what individual boys eat in both quantity and meal choice: this is rarely the case in those schools that operate centralised dining halls with cafeteria service.

House Food Committees

Each Boarding House has a representative House Food Committee which will routinely meet at least twice a year under the chairmanship of the Housemaster with the Deputy Catering Manager in attendance. The Day Houses have a joint committee which meets with the same frequency. All committees can be convened at very short notice if the Housemaster or the boys believe there is an issue to be discussed. The Committees give the boys the opportunity to speak to the Catering staff directly: concerns are always acted upon. Meetings are minuted, with copies being passed to the Second Master (who has overall responsibility for Pastoral Care), the Commercial and Operations Director (who has responsibility for Catering), the Housemaster and the Head Cook: a copy is also displayed on the House notice board.

Other Committees

“House Food” is a standing agenda item for Housemasters’ Meetings which are held twice each term under the chairmanship of the Headmaster with the Second Master present. It is also open for boys to raise issues relating to Catering at meetings of the Upper and Lower School Councils.