

# FAQs

## LYCÉE CANTINE

LAST UPDATED 3/31/25

FOR ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS, PLEASE REACH OUT TO

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## WHY A CANTINE AT THE LYCÉE?

*Questions submitted by parents are answered in the following FAQ.*

### KEY POINTS:

#### Lunches:

The goal is to establish a sustainable state-of-the-art kitchen for the long term to:

- Make readily available fresher higher quality meals
- Prepare meals in the ASH kitchen and deliver to SAU and ORT campuses.
- Enhance French culture and education



#### Education & Center of Gastronomy:

- The Lycée will be providing quality meals alongside opportunities for collaboration with chefs-in-residence.
- The Center of Gastronomy will host inter-campus events, inviting students to large scale cooking events once or twice a year.

#### Funding:

- Phase 1 (Summer 2025): \$400K allocated for kitchen construction.
- Phase 2 (2025-2026) the next \$400K raised will fund the implementation and first-year operations.



## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS:

### **1. Has having external food caterers with existing infrastructure been considered, as it could eliminate the need for investment in a new kitchen?**

Yes, External catering has been considered, but it presented logistical challenges:

- a. External caterers that deliver to Ahbsury and Ortega do not deliver to Sausalito and vice versa.
- b. Parents and students satisfaction with Choice Lunch, is low, with an average participation rate of just 16% across campuses:
  - i. Ortega 45 out of 324 students | 14%
  - ii. Ashbury 75 out of 380 | 20%
  - iii. Sausalito 20 out of 142 | 14%

Past providers had similar issues, such as School Foodies who were consistently late delivering food in Sausalito. Good Earth only served Sausalito and went out of business.

### **2. Are mobile kitchen solutions, such as container-based kitchens, that require capital investment but do not need to be left behind in a lease available today?**

Our architect, DNM Architecture, looked into such solutions

- a. San Francisco does not allow container-based kitchens
- b. Changes, even superficial and removable to the Sausalito campus are not allowed under the lease agreement.
- c. The Lycée owns Ashbury and can improve the space.
- d. The process and costs of building mobile kitchen solutions are not necessarily easier or less costly than having a permanent kitchen.



**3. How do you justify the construction of a kitchen at another campus using philanthropic funds from other campuses? What is the added value for their children’s experience?**

The Lycée is one school with 3 campuses. Philanthropic funds are always applied to the benefit of all 3 campuses.

In this case, the kitchen would be built on the Ashbury campus, because it is owned and not leased, there is a feasible space, and it is the campus with the most students.

Ortega and Sausalito would benefit from the kitchen as higher quality meals prepared there would be delivered to them.

The added value would be healthier meals prepared with traceable ingredients served to the children.

**4. Was an analysis conducted on this?**

To inform the development of our lunch program, the Core Committee<sup>1</sup> (administration) has engaged in extensive research. This includes: conducting market research, interviewing food service providers, visiting schools with diverse lunch program models, and holding detailed discussions with schools that have successfully implemented similar programs. We've gained valuable insights from institutions like La Scuola, Archbishop Riordan, Mid-Peninsula High School, Lycée Français de New York, and Lycée Français de Chicago, among others.

**5. What would parents be charged for a meal?**

Before determining the price, the Lycée is waiting for submissions to the RFP, comparing offers from different food providers.

- a. Target meal price: \$10 to \$14. Proposals have been between \$10 and \$18. Current provider charges an average of \$8.
- b. Meal plans remain optional and separate from tuition,

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<sup>1</sup> Emmanuel Texier | Head of School, Erin Grogran | CFO, Cupertino Palestina | Director of facilities, Nathalie Hautavoine | Director of Advancement, Mireille Sagne | Director of Admissions



**6. Do all other French Schools in California provide French meals on-site?**

French schools in the Bay Area and California do not serve exclusively French meals. The Lycée will offer high-quality, nutritionally balanced food, including French, local, and international dishes.

**7. Concern about the potential long-term costs of meals and tuition,**

The program is designed to be self-sustaining, with costs covered by participating families. Long-term options, like bundling meal costs with tuition, could be considered in collaboration with parents.

This model, observed in several schools we visited, offers potential cost reductions through predictable meal ordering. However, this decision would be made mutually at a later date.

**8. Do we need a certain number of families to opt in for the program to sustain itself?**

Yes, we do need a certain number of families to opt in. It is noteworthy that comparable schools that started such a program with a low number of registrations successfully reached critical mass numbers.

Note that during Phase 2 of the project, costs will be subsidized by funds raised until self-sustainable.

**9. Why would we not continue with the setup and program as it currently exists?**

The current provider, Choice Lunch, has low engagement. The average percentage of participating students is 16%. Parents have been asking for a quality food program for years.

The existing infrastructure cannot meet our goal of providing quality meals for every student on each campus (up to 700 -1,000 per day if we include faculty & staff).

The new infrastructure would significantly enhance our cooking classes and workshop offer.



**10. Why does the school's approach seem rushed, and why was information shared so late?**

This initiative is the result of a long-standing, deliberate process, not a rushed decision.

For years, the Lycée has addressed parent feedback by collaborating with various providers and exploring different lunch program options. After exhausting external provider possibilities and in response to significant parent demand, the Administration and Board decided to investigate the feasibility of an on-premises state-of-the-art kitchen.

Initially, the Core Committee explored the feasibility of constructing a modern kitchen facility on the Ashbury campus. This involved collaboration with DNM Architecture, the firm most familiar with the campus, and industry professionals.

Subsequently, the Lycée Cantine Advisory Committee<sup>2</sup> was established to incorporate parent input into the process.

The school presented the project to the broader parent community in September 2024, with the goal of launching the program in September 2026.

March 22, 2025, Funds at the Gala for the Fund for the Future, Lycée Cantine we raised \$400,000 for this project..

**11. How will the school ensure that the new meal service aligns with the cultural and social importance of lunchtime in France?**

A school cafeteria plays a crucial role in the daily lives of students. Far more than just a place to eat, it is a center for social and nutritional development. Gathering at the table, and sharing the same meal aligns with the cultural and social importance of lunchtime in France. The Lycée cantine aims to offer, not just French meals but a variety of international dishes for the students to discover and enjoy together.

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<sup>2</sup> Chef Matthew Dolan, Molly de la Falaise, Irina Iskander, Lu'chen Foster, Julie Golsong, Yoël Gorfain, Daniel Yanisse  
Trustees: Simon Baker, Andrea Delaroque



**12. Suggestion of having a dedicated lunchroom**

The Lycée will continue serving lunches outside when weather permits or in a multipurpose room (except for Maternelles lunches that are delivered in the classroom) as there are no other available spaces.

**13. How will lunches be served? Family style or boxed?**

Lunches will be individually served and not served family-style.

Family-style service requires special training, licensing, and a certain number of staff on hand, increasing cost and time.

Individual serving allows for distribution to Ortega and Sausalito

In line with the Lycée's principles, only sustainable packaging will be used—no plastic.

**14. How will the school address the issue of meals degrading during transport?**

The short transport times from Ashbury (15 minutes to Ortega, 30 minutes to Sausalito), combined with the use of high-quality, properly cooked ingredients, ensure that meals arrive fresh at each campus.

**15. When will the canteen will be operational?**

The meal service for students will be operational by September 2026. In the meantime, chefs will volunteer their time for the teaching kitchen component and help develop the cultural aspect of the culinary program.

**16. Will there be children in the canteen space?** No, culinary lessons in the multi-purpose rooms work best.

**17. Are we open to leasing space to have a kitchen offsite?**

Yes, but that is not the first choice as we wish to remain in control.

**18. Will we need external refrigeration?**

Yes, advised for food delivery and security issues. The lower parking lot is currently the best option, with additional refrigeration in the canteen as well.



**19. Do we have the necessary electricity/power?**

Yes, we have enough amps, and we have a clear pathway for ventilation as well, previously we had a kiln at the school.

**20. What is the price point?**

Depending on the food provider or in house chef, the price varies between \$10 and \$18/unit for each student based on worksheet, cost of space, labor, nutritional guidelines, sourcing and transparency.

**21. What are other needs?** Reheating units, or heating towers at each delivery campus, individual boxes/trays to be heated.

**22. Business plan detailing the financial breakdown beyond the general statement of needing \$400k this year and another \$400k next year.**

**Phase 1- Summer 2025**

Buildout (\$300/sq ft x 650 sq ft)	\$195,000
Permitting, drawings, licensing	\$100,000
Equipment	\$105,000
Total	\$400,000

**Phase 2 - 2025-2026**

Implementation: Start-up cost to launch the actual service

**23. Who can apply to be the service provider for the Lycée Cantine?**

The [RFP](#) is open to the public, anyone in the industry that can meet the “1 school 3 campuses” requirements can submit their proposals by March 28, 2025.