



Catering Teamtalk

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★ Message from Catering Manager



The severe weather conditions before the Christmas break and the subsequent thaw were a challenge to us all and to our suppliers! Many thanks and congratulations for struggling on in the face of adversity! The catering service emergency plan was certainly put to the test. As ever communication and coordination are absolutely key.

★ Free School Meals Criteria

The number of free meals served across the Belfast area saw an increase last term due to the change in the criteria. This was available to nursery and Key stage 1 pupils and will be extended to Key stage 2 in September. The criteria has been extended to include parents who are in receipt of Working Tax credit and have an annual taxable income which does not exceed £16,190

★ New Technology

Parent Pay – This system was introduced to Ashfield Girls' School in September. The system allows parents to pay on line for their children's school meals and for any other school events. This 12 month pilot will be carefully monitored and evaluated to see if it would be of benefit in other locations. It is my aim to ensure every kitchen has access to email in the next 12 months. The first step will be to introduce broadband connections to 6 kitchens

★ Nutritional Standards

Six primary schools received visits from the Inspection team and all received "outstanding" progress reports. They were:

★ Carr's Glen ★ Taughmonagh ★ Cranmore ★ Forge ★ Wheatfield ★ Victoria Park



Meal deals have been introduced into all post-primary schools with a cash cafeteria system.

The aim is to encourage pupils to make healthier choices from the tariff.

★ Carr's Glen Stands out from the Crowd

Carr's Glen was one of six primary schools to be visited in November 2010 by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) and was given a verdict of "Outstanding" by Nutritional Associate inspector Dr Joanna Purdy.

Dr Purdy experienced a lovely lunchtime experience and a good rapport between the catering staff and lunchtime supervisors. She also praised the attractive presentation of the recently introduced break service and commented that "progress was being made towards achieving food based standards and that the menu was fully compliant"

Catering supervisor Yvonne Barclay and her team have been running a breakfast club at the school for the past two years attracting approx 45-50 kids every day.

The menu consists of Muffins, begals, scones, yoghurts, pancakes, fresh variety of fruit cut up and once a month the children are treated to a strawberry and banana smoothie.

A new break service was recently introduced in November 2010 attracting approx 255 children, an uptake of 81% of enrolment.

Recipe for fruit smoothie – Serves 12 children

Fruit smoothies, 2 strawberry yoghurts, 12 strawberries, 3 bananas, pint pure fruit juice



★ All Change in South & East Belfast

The school catering service has seen some major changes over the past 2 years but none more so than Pauline Thompson, area manager in South and East Belfast.

Pauline has seen significant changes in her area where three new schools have opened (2 of which are large cash cafeterias) and three key supervisors have retired. As you can imagine Pauline has had to face some tough operational challenges and managing a process of change has meant a major restructuring in the area sparking a lengthy recruitment and selection process.

Managing this process of change has effected approx 50% of the kitchens in the area, creating 12 supervisors posts culminating in seven supervisors being transferred to take up different posts in other kitchens and creating four new posts filled by candidates from outside the school catering service.

The four new senior unit supervisors in South & East Belfast, Noel Lyttle at Fleming Fulton who comes from contract catering, Adele Smyth at St Bride's who comes from a private restaurant, Maxine Mathieson at Ulidia who comes from contract catering and Scott Graham at Strandtown who comes from a well known chain of pubs as head chef.

It's still early days for the new recruits who are still settling into their new roles in school catering. It's certainly not like the school meals they remember as children, the food is healthier, children are more forthright about their needs and getting use to the ingredients and the ordering system is still a challenge. One thing they can agree on however is the more family friendly working hours which facilitate a better work life balance which they say has made it all worthwhile.



Photo left to right:

Noel Lyttle, Adele Smyth, Maxine Mathieson and Scott Graham

★ Scores on the Doors

Belfast City Council will be introducing a new format for the Scores on the Doors hygiene rating system. The now familiar stars will be replaced by a number system with a new logo and stickers available from March 2011.

This new system is to be adopted by councils and local authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and is set for a national launch from April 2011. Any kitchens inspected after the new system is introduced will be notified in writing within 14 days and if you're not happy with your score then you can request a re-visit whenever any improvements or points for action on your inspection report have been carried out.



★ Deal or No Deal

Special promotional packs are being sent out for use in cash cafeterias. These packs contain specially designed menu cards or 'Meal Deals' as they are known which offer customers a choice of main course and dessert all for £2.40.

There are 21 different meal deals in all taken from the nutritional standards recipe book which ensures the meals are nutritionally balanced. The aim of meal deals is to promote the update of school meals and encourage children to choose the healthier options available.



★ St Clare's Fundraiser



The catering team at St Clare's primary school made Children in Need a day to remember on Friday 19th November. Activities were planned throughout the day to raise money for the charity including coffee morning, breakfast club and during school lunches. 'Pudsy Day' as it is known in the school is always a special fun day in the school calendar and is well supported by staff, pupils and parents. Staff dressed up in Pudsy T shirts and pupils got to have a non-uniform day and spent their time making masks for the occasion. The day ended with a trip to the BBC to watch the Children in need show where the school donated a cheque for £485.

★ A Role Model for the Boys



Philip McCullough started working in school meals as cook at Model Boys in August 2010 at just age 22. Not an easy task as Philip is one in a number of male employees coming into a service that was once an exclusively female workforce. However this trend is beginning to change over recent years with the number of male supervisors rising to 8 out of 60 or representing 13% of supervisors.

Trying to fit into a predominately female working environment hasn't deterred Philip and his secret to fitting in is good team work with the girls and learning from their wealth of knowledge and experience. A former pupil at the school Philip owes his success to having knowledge of the area and good rapport with pupils and staff whom he knows well. Philip says: *"I'm loving it here and the hours suit better"*.

★ Retirements

Mary Martin,

**catering assistant at St Matthews,
retires after 24 years service.**

Briege Caldwell,

**catering assistant at St Louise's No. 1,
retires on grounds of ill health
after 25 years service.**

