

## **New Primary Menu Changes**

### **1. Removal of Filled rolls, Sandwiches and Wraps**

#### **Improved nutrition**

- Hot meals promote higher satiety levels reducing the likelihood of pupils feeling hungry later in the day and equally assisting with concentration.
- They promote consumption of healthy, cooked ingredients such as vegetables, lean proteins, wholegrains and healthy fats as opposed to processed, high glycaemic cold white rolls.
- For some pupils, this may be their only hot meal of the day as may rely on school meals as their primary source of daily nutrition.
- Additionally, feedback indicates that younger pupils can feel overwhelmed by the amount of option available to them. Jacket potatoes will be continued as the healthy alternative to the main meal option.
- In line with the proposed Welsh Government Eating in Schools revisions these new standards restrict the provision of ham and cheese.

#### **Encourages healthy eating habits**

- Hot meals encourage the development of cutlery skills and help develop better eating patterns. By eating a warm, balanced meal at lunchtime sets a precedent for making healthier food choices at home and in the future.
- They also increase exposure to a variety of different food groups encouraging pupils to develop a taste for nutritious foods. A white roll offers little diversity in nutrients or flavour.

**Gaynor Davies**

**Cyfarwyddwr Addysg a Gwasanaethau Cynhwysiant**  
**Director of Education and Inclusion Services**

Ffôn/Tel: 01443 744014/744008

**Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Rhondda Cynon Taf**  
**Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council**

Canolfan Menter y Cymoedd, Parc Hen Lofa'r Navigation,  
Valleys Innovation Centre, Navigation Park,  
Abercynon CF45 4SN



## **Operational efficiency and cost management**

- Reducing menu options helps simplify kitchen operations improving efficiency and consistency.
- RCT CBC is more generous than other councils in terms of meal offerings currently providing two hot meal options, filled jacket potatoes and filled rolls/sandwiches/wraps. In contrast, many councils offer fewer choices. 12 out of 22 Councils in Wales do not provide sandwiches or rolls, some offer one choice of hot meal option and some do not offer the choice of jacket potatoes or sandwiches.
- Helps to reduce food waste. The amount of food waste observed from pupils consuming the rolls was noted as excessive whereas hot meals can be portioned and planned more effectively, minimising leftovers.
- Bulk preparation of hot meals can be more economical than maintaining a variety of additional cold options. Preparing sandwiches and rolls demands more staff time and resources, which is costly. On days with higher sandwich orders, additional staff hours may be required. Some kitchens also face challenges with limited food storage and preparation space.

### **2. Removal of Cheese and Biscuits from the Daily Additional Items**

- As mentioned above, feedback has indicated pupils are overwhelmed by the number of options available. Currently, they can choose from the main dessert, cheese and biscuits, frozen yogurt and fruit.
- Reducing these choices will help shorten the time children spend deciding, which is important given the limited time available during school lunchtimes
- Additionally, both the cheese and biscuits contained Palm Oil which we are aiming to reduce due to its environmental impact and sustainability concerns.

### **3. Change to 50% Wholegrain Bread, 50% Wholegrain Rice and Wholegrain Pasta**

- In line with the proposed Welsh Government Healthy Eating in Schools revisions it is recommended that all bread provided must contain a minimum of 50% wholegrain with at least one starchy carbohydrate each week containing 50% wholegrain.
- Wholegrain varieties are better sources of fibre which are important for a healthy digestive system.
- 50% wholegrain rice and wholegrain pasta have been trialled during our taste testing days with most pupils not recognising a difference in taste.

**Gaynor Davies**

**Cyfarwyddwr Addysg a Gwasanaethau Cynhwysiant**  
**Director of Education and Inclusion Services**

Ffôn/Tel: 01443 744014/744008

**Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Rhondda Cynon Taf**  
**Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council**

Canolfan Menter y Cymoedd, Parc Hen Lofa'r Navigation,  
Valleys Innovation Centre, Navigation Park,  
Abercynon CF45 4SN



#### **4. Serving the Full Offering**

- Catering staff will be instructed to plate the full meal offering to ensure all pupils receive a balanced meal, which is crucial for their health and wellbeing.
- This approach also guarantees all pupils are provided with the same nutrition and streamlines the process for kitchen staff.
- This is standardised across all schools unless a pupil has an evidenced medical reason and is registered on Resolve to exempt them from this.

#### **5. Condiment Use**

- The offering of condiments is to be continued on **Fridays only** in limited quantities (currently the recommendation is 10ml = 2 teaspoons).
- Condiments can be high in added sugars, salt and saturated fats, therefore, frequent consumption may lead to excess calorie and salt intake, contributing to poor eating habits and health outcomes.

#### **6. Use of Sustainable Products**

- As part of our new menu, we have made a conscious effort to incorporate more sustainable products, such as Red Tractor-certified meat and MSC-certified fish.
- Additionally, with the shift towards more home-based cooking, we have significantly reduced the use of products containing Palm Oil.

**Gaynor Davies**

**Cyfarwyddwr Addysg a Gwasanaethau Cynhwysiant**  
**Director of Education and Inclusion Services**

Ffôn/Tel: 01443 744014/744008

**Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Rhondda Cynon Taf**  
**Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council**

Canolfan Menter y Cymoedd, Parc Hen Lofa'r Navigation,  
Valleys Innovation Centre, Navigation Park,  
Abercynon CF45 4SN

