



4 March 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to inform you about changes to our school meal deal that will come into effect from 13 April 2026.

Since our last catering review in 2023, the cost of providing school meals – including food, packaging, staffing, and transport – has risen significantly. In response, we have carefully reviewed our lunch offer to ensure it remains sustainable and comparable with other local schools.

Our school meal deal is popular with students, and we know how important it is to keep it affordable. To maintain the current price of £3.50, we need to adjust the contents of the deal. From 13 April, a drink will no longer be included in the meal deal.

We recognise that many families are managing household budgets carefully, and we have worked hard to keep increases to a minimum across our catering offer. The changes mirror the approach taken by many neighbouring schools and reflect rising costs, while limiting the impact on families as far as possible.

This change will also have a positive environmental effect. Across our secondary schools, removing the drink from the deal will save an estimated 190,000 plastic from landfill each year and reduce transport emissions across our supply chain. Students will continue to have access to drinking water throughout the day, and we encourage them to bring a reusable bottle to refill as needed.

Free school meals continue to be available for eligible students, and full details can be found on our school website: [River Academy - School Meals](#). If you think your child may qualify or if you need help with the application process, please contact the school office at [river@maidenerleghtrust.org](mailto:river@maidenerleghtrust.org) and a member of staff will be happy to support you.

Thank you for taking the time to read this update, and for your continued support as we work to maintain a high-quality, affordable catering service for all students.

Yours sincerely,

Julie Foster  
Chief Operations Officer

