

Free School Meal Allowance 2024/25 - £2.75

Free School Meal Allowance is given to any eligible young person here at Coombe Dean School and is an allowance of £2.75 per day. This is to support our young persons in purchasing food items daily from the canteen.

Within Coombe Dean School, and all other schools, it is a minimum expectation that we provide school meals that meet good healthy eating standards. All food served here must meet a minimum standard which complies with the school food standards, so that children have access to a healthy and well-balanced diet.

The school food standards apply to all maintained schools, and academies that were founded before 2010 and after June 2014. This must mean that we must provide:

- high-quality meat, poultry, or oily fish
- fruit and vegetables
- bread, other cereals, and potatoes

As the menus here in Coombe Dean are so varied for its customers, with lots of variety to choose from, we have a pricing structure that meets the needs of the requests and standards set out by the School Food Standards and this sometimes poses the questions, such as:

1. **What 'Free School Meal (FSM) Allowance' does my child receive?**

At Coombe Dean School they will receive a daily allowance of £2.75 per person, per day.

2. **What can my child buy for their £2.75 FSM Allowance?**

As a community here at Coombe Dean any young person who is eligible for the Free School Meal Allowance has this amount of money added to their Cunningham's account to support them in purchasing 'food items' that can support and formulate a healthy, balanced diet from the daily selections on offer. It must be stressed that we as a school cannot dictate what our young people may choose, but are always here to help support and guide them when needed in any choices they make and to help prevent overspending etc... A copy of our Menus and Price Lists are available from the Website and can be downloaded to support your budgeting.

3. **Can I build up my daily allowance for a bigger spend on another day?**

The short answer to this is '**No**', as it is a daily allowance given to eligible people on a daily basis and is always applied at the end of each day. It is then deducted from the total spend for the day of every eligible person regardless of if it has been spent or not. So, there are no carry overs on the account.

This said, you can always assist and support your child in being able to purchase additional items or even more expensive items which total more than the £2.75 given for the FSM Allowance. These additional funds will then be balanced against their spend after the FSM element has been deducted from the daily total (e.g., your child purchases a muffin for £1.20 in break 1, then chooses a Large Hot Pasta Pot at £2.40 in break 2, the Total would come to

£3.60 – at the end of the day the FSM Allowance will be deducted from the £3.60 leaving 85p left to pay from the account). Any valid overspends are your responsibility to manage and pay.

4. **Can I place restrictions on my Childs Account to prevent Overspending?**

‘Yes’ – but these are limited and will require a written approval from you to be placed upon and or removed from the account and are only a ‘prevention from overspending’ or allowing a ‘daily spend limit’ to happen.

5. **Can I see what food my child has purchased?**

‘Yes’ - you can see this information in ParentPay. Once logged in, from the home page click on ‘Transaction history’ on the left-hand side and then click on ‘Balance history’. Here you can select your child’s name, the payment item ‘Dinner money for Coombe Dean School’ and the month to view. On the report you can then click on the description link, and it will display what items have been purchased during that week.

If you need assistance using ParentPay, please contact the Finance Team at finance@coombedean.co.uk.

6. **Are there any meal deal options available for my child to choose to support me, if we only want them to only have the Main Meal at Lunch?**

There are lots of options available to help support your child in maximising their budgets. The key is to work together and support your child in knowing the FSM allowance is there to support them and below are some options they could choose for £2.75:

- a. Main Meal & Basic Cake (served in Break 2 only)
- b. Grab Bag (includes sandwich, crisps, piece of fruit, and small bottle of water)
- c. Small Hot Pasta Pot & Basic Cake

Along with these possibilities, for your child, is choosing any of the other individually priced options made available to them and up to the value of the FSM allowance in the day. It is important to also identify that the amount that your child spends in a day is set by you and not by the school, but there are always very affordable healthy, nutritious meals here for your child to choose from and that meet all their dietary requirements.

If you have any further questions, then please contact our Catering Manager Mr Lovell by email at slowell@coombedean.co.uk and who is always there to assist and support your child whilst they are here at Coombe Dean School.