



DAPA visit to school Dining Hall - Monday 7th March 2022

Three parent representatives from DAPA with children at all stages of the Prep, Junior, early, middle and late senior schools met with Mr Burbury and Mrs Morrison to experience school lunch provision first hand.

On arrival at the dining hall the lunch system was explained and we were introduced to the kitchen staff and Manager just prior to service commencing. There were a large variety of options available, including a deli style salad bar; 3 course lunch option which includes 3 different hot main courses, one being a vegetarian dish; a pasta server and the McNabb 'n' Grab section for sausage rolls, pizza twists, sandwiches, and confectionary etc. We learned that, on average, about 830 people pass through the Dining Hall each day. 300 of them have a three-course option, around 450 buy food from McNabb 'n' Grab, and the rest choose a pasta dish from the Pasta Bar.

The Catering Manager creates menus on a three-weekly cycle, these are available on the school website. Due to ongoing global challenges with supplies, occasional changes to the menu on a certain day may be necessary. The catering team monitor food consumption both in terms of popularity but also to minimise waste. Conversations regarding specific dietary needs happen regularly with individual families.

Since returning to school after the first lockdown the queuing system has been outside the building and this continues to help with a more spacious feel within, making for a more positive dining experience for all pupils. At no point during our visit did the dining hall feel too full. The queue outside was not long and moved smoothly. Similarly, inside the hall the children moved on quickly once lunches were finished and cleared away. Everyone leaves the building using a separate exit. Those with packed lunches arrived through a side door, skipping the queues, to take a seat inside.

Prep 1 -3 pupils eat packed lunches in their classrooms. Prep 4 and 5 can choose to go to the Dining Hall (or have a packed lunch) and move through the hot counter only at 12 noon. Junior 1 and 2 taking a school lunch follow at 12.10pm with Form 1 coming in at 12.20pm and subsequent year groups arriving at 12:25pm. Lunch service stays open until 1:15pm, but most pupils have been served by 12:55pm. Members of staff were present at the external and internal doorways and inside the dining hall, assisting with the flow of students to the three different food service areas and then to the designated seating for each age group. This seemed to be all well organised system.

Each of us enjoyed different 3 course lunches in the middle of the normal lunchtime service. We were able to ask Mr Burbury and Mrs Morrison questions around availability of food, options for eating packed lunches when the weather is poor and about queuing times. There is never a point when the dining hall runs out of food and there were plenty of choices left at the end of the service. School Management are in regular contact with the Catering Manager, we learned that a small cross-section of pupils have recently been consulted and that there is a pupil led Dining Hall Committee, made up of boarders (who visit the Dining Hall three times per day), that meet with the catering manager once per term.

The experience overall gave us, as parent representatives, a really useful and enjoyable insight into lunch provision. Mr Burbury and Mrs Morrison were happy to field our questions, which have been summarised in a useful FAQs for parents, available to view on the school website.