

Michaela Food Policy

“Pupils’ behaviour at lunch was astonishing. It’s clear that they are really happy here”

Visitor, June 2017

At the heart of our school community, family lunch at Michaela plays a central role in developing a range of important social skills within every pupil. As a communal part of the school day, every child has the opportunity to develop their confidence and communication skills over a delicious meal. Just like a family, our collaborative setting affords all children the opportunity to sit and discuss their days with adults and peers alike. When guests come to visit the school, they always remark with delight upon the quality of our pupils’ conversation, their confidence with adults, and their kindness towards each other.

Developing the whole child

Michaela’s mission doesn’t stop at developing academic skills. Family Lunch is just one of the ways in which we work to develop the whole child. Lunch is the perfect time to teach our children how to be kind and helpful towards each other.

Instead of a canteen culture where pupils can sometimes leave their trays behind, expecting an anonymous cleaner to clean up after them, at Michaela, pupils work together to clear up after they have eaten; they collaborate as a team to get the job done. This collaborative atmosphere affords them the opportunity to learn the important life skills of kindness and a sense of responsibility from each other.

A Culture of Kindness and Gratitude

Family Lunch ensures that no pupil is left alone during lunch time. Children sit in groups of six, each led by a teacher, who takes great care to ensure that every child takes part in the conversation and nobody is left out. At the end of lunch, pupils are invited to offer ‘appreciations’; they volunteer to reflect upon and thank a teacher, parent or fellow pupil for showing them kindness that day. This helps the pupils to understand both the importance of small acts of kindness, and of saying thank you and showing gratitude towards others.

Eating Together

We are fortunate to draw our pupil body from the diverse communities of Brent and Harrow. Our pupils follow a range of cultural traditions, religions and ways of life. Family lunch allows all pupils the opportunity to get to know pupils from backgrounds different to their own. The sharing of food and mutual appreciation symbolises what it means to be a young person living in multicultural Britain today.

In order to cater to all cultural backgrounds, we serve vegetarian food at lunch times. This enables all pupils to sit and enjoy a meal together regardless of their cultural background. Our multicultural ethos supports all our young people to feel at home and welcome at Michaela, with no religious or ethnic group overlooked. In addition to a nutritious two-course midday meal, pupils receive a healthy break time snack in the morning. Michaela is a vegetarian school. Food & drink from outside are not permitted on the premises.

Trying New Things

An additional benefit of our family-style lunch is that it enables all pupils to try new things. With a diverse menu, we continually update and experiment with new recipes that encourage and inspire all of our young people to try new and healthy meals every day. We expect parents to do their best in supporting their children when trying out new foods.

Convenience for Parents

We understand that family life can be busy for parents. In order to reduce the hassle of paying for lunch, we make it possible for parents to pay termly fees online using Parent Pay. Parents receive details of how to access their Parent Pay account via email and letter when their child starts at Michaela. We are happy to answer any questions regarding payment at any time throughout the school year.

Where parents struggle to afford lunch payments, we invite them to apply for Free School Meals via Brent Local Authority. If a child qualifies for Free School Meals, parents will receive a refund for any payments previously made. Furthermore, where families are not eligible for Free School Meals under the Local Authority guidelines, the school will consider supporting families through smaller, more affordable payments, or at a reduced rate. If parents would like to discuss these options, they should get in touch with us via our email at info@mcsbrent.co.uk or via telephone on 0208 795 3183.

If a child is absent from school for more than five consecutive days, we will happily refund lunch money paid for these days. We do not offer refunds for fewer than five days as standard because of the size of the school and the logistical problems smaller refunds entail. However, if a family is struggling financially and would like us to consider giving a smaller refund for less than five days consecutive absence, we invite parents to contact us using the details above. We are always happy to discuss finance options with families and want to do our very best to support parents as much as possible.

Approval by Governing Body and Review Date

This policy and plan has been formally approved and adopted by the Local Governing Body at a formally convened meeting.

Signed: 
Chair of Governing Body

Date: 03 July 2017

Review date: July 2018

End of Statement