

School meals in Edinburgh



There is a Twitter debate raging today, some of which you will see on our Twitter feed on the right hand side, after the ruling by Argyll and Bute Council to stop a 9 year-old blogger called [VEG](#) (otherwise Martha) from taking her camera to school to photograph her £2 school meal for her blog. The blog has had over 2 million hits and has raised funds for the charity Mary's Meals.

There are very good and well-researched articles on [Edinburgh Eye](#) and [Paul Clarke Photography](#), among many others, which will give you a more detailed view on the ins and outs of the whole matter. Our point is not to rerun the arguments here either for or against freedom of photographers, schools' policies on photography, the quality of school meals or indeed Argyll and Bute's own PR strategy which has resulted in this statement this morning:-

Argyll and Bute Council wholly refutes the unwarranted attacks on its schools catering service which culminated in national press headlines which have led catering staff to fear for their jobs. The Council has directly avoided any criticism of anyone involved in the 'never seconds' blog for obvious reasons despite a strongly held view that the information presented in it misrepresented the options and choices available to pupils however this escalation means we had to act to protect staff from the distress and harm it was causing. In particular, the photographic images uploaded appear to only represent a fraction of the choices available to pupils, so a decision has been made by the council to stop photos being taken in the school canteen.

There have been discussions between senior council staff and

Martha's father however, despite an acknowledgement that the media coverage has produced these unwarranted attacks, he intimated that he would continue with the blog.

The council has had no complaints for the last two years about the quality of school meals other than one from the Payne family received on 6 June and there have been no changes to the service on offer since the introduction of the blog.

Pupils have a daily choice of two meals from a menu which is designed with pupils, parents and teachers. Our summer menu is about to be launched and includes main course choices like meat or vegetarian lasagne served with carrots and garlic bread or chicken pie with puff pastry, mashed potato and mixed vegetables.

Pupils can choose from at least two meals every day. They pay £2 for two courses and this could be a starter and a main or a main and a desert. Each meal comes with milk or water. Pupils can have as much salad and bread as they want. Salad, vegetables, fruit, yoghurt and cheese options are available every day. These are standing options and are not a result of any changes in response to the blog site.

As part of the curriculum for excellence, pupils in all our schools are regularly taught about healthy eating and at lunch breaks staff encourage pupils to make good choices from what is on offer. We use a system called 'Nutmeg' to make sure everything is nutritionally balanced. Our staff also get nutrition awareness training so they know how to provide a good healthy meal. There is portion sized guidance which we adhere to and it is matched to the age of the child so they get the right amount of food. Second portions would mean too many calories for pupils.

In Lochgilphead Primary School we are piloting a new pre-ordering scheme which is designed to encourage class

discussion around meal choices and also improves the accuracy of meal choices. The pupils use a touch screen to select their lunch option and the data is downloaded in the kitchen so they know how many portions of each meal are required. As they place their order, the pupils are given a coloured band which relates to their meal choice that day. They wear it during the morning, and at lunchtime they hand it to the catering assistant, who will give them the corresponding meal.

The council's focus is now on supporting the school in the education of young people in Argyll and Bute.

But it did lead us to wonder what information there is about meals being served up in our Edinburgh schools. And perhaps part of the reason for the blog, which we have read since it started, was to highlight the quantity and quality of the meals being served, which of course we are unable to comment on. What do your children think of their school meals in Edinburgh?

It turns out that there is a menu published online for all Edinburgh and Midlothian schools. Here they are:-

School meals in Edinburgh are charged at £1.75 per day. Most Primary Schools in Edinburgh will be eating from this one today. Since it is Friday most children in Edinburgh today will have a choice of tuna, cheese or egg rolls with pudding, cookie, fruit and milk or milkshake:-

[CEC Final Menu 2012](#)

Amey supply school meals to Broomhouse, Castleview, Craighour Park, Craigroyston, Forthview, Oxfangs, Pirniehall, St David's RC, St Joseph's RC and St Peter's RC Primary Schools from this menu here:-

[Amey Final Menu 2012](#)

And Mitie provide school meals for two of our primary schools, Bonaly and Juniper Green Primary Schools from this menu:-

[Mitie_menu_2012__4_](#)

Meanwhile in Midlothian they choose from this menu here:-

[Midlothian Menu A4Jan12](#)