School Council Meeting with Pabulum Catering – Friday 14th January 2022

Present: Kevin Hogston (Chairperson)
School Council (26 pupils)
Pete O'Connor, Pabulum Catering, Operations Manager

Mr Hogston introduced Pete O'Connor to the children and the children introduced themselves.

Peter O'Connor explained the aims of Pabulum and what they were trying to achieve. Pabulum want to move away from the 'school dinner' vibe and give more of a 'restaurant' experience. This is achieved by:

- food being served on plates and pudding bowls;
- separate salad bar
- using table cloths;
- bread and water being available at the table;
- staff wear uniform and name badges.

The children were given the opportunity to ask Pete one question each:

When do dinner repeat?
The menu is on a three week cycle with three choices being available every day.

Why is bread on the table?
Bread forms part of the meal. By being on the table this gives more of a restaurant feel and encourages good manners.

How do you ensure that options don't run out before the last year group has been served?
All options have been available until the end of service. We are currently over-catering until we get a true picture of numbers.

Why did you change some of the school dinners?
We offer different foods from the previous caterers. Menu's change on a termly basis and children may be able to have input in the Summer Term choices.

Could an adult monitor the bin, there is a lot of waste?
Every child is given a portion according to the key stage. Children's appetites vary.

What will happen to the flight trays we used to use?
These are currently in storage whilst a possible use is found for them in school.

Are we going to have 'theme days'?
Pabulum have a bank of 'theme days' to link with the school curriculum – Chinese New Year, Pancake Day, favourites day and speciality day.

Could we have a separate water station to avoid water spillages on tables?
We are trying to avoid too much moving around in the dining hall. Bread and water on the dining table is a new concept and something which we are getting used to.

Why is there no egg or tuna in the salad bar?
There are 14 key allergens. The salad bar is unsupervised and is therefore allergen-free.

Are there going to be burgers?
There are burgers on the menu week commencing 24th January.

What happens to the waste food?
There is currently more food waste than there would usually be whilst Pabulum get the balance sorted. Richmond council provide a special food waste collection service.

Is there anything on this week's menu that we won't have again?
Each menu is on a three week cycle.

Do Pabulum catch their own fish or buy it?
Pabulum work with a company who work with the fisherman. The same for the vegetable growers.

Would it be possible to adjust the portion size as desired?
There are government guidelines stipulating how much protein should be provided to KS1 and KS2 children. Children are free to ask for more of any other foods on offer.

Could we have sushi instead of pasta?
There would need to be a lot of sushi to make a meal. Sushi making is something which could be included in fun cooking classes.

Could we have a vegan day/week?
We have 'Meat-free Monday' each week when every main course is meat free. Every day there is a vegan or vegetarian option available.

Are cakes homemade?
Yes

Would it be possible to have 'Tacho Tuesday'?
This would need to be discussed.

Four questions were then put to the School Council

Have school meals improved? – 26 out of 26 agreed

Was the removal of the flight trays an improvement? – 26 out of 26 agreed

Was the dining experience more like that of a restaurant? – 26 out of 26 agreed

Was there anything which the children would like to see on the menu? – fish burgers, nachos, red Thai curry, grilled cheese sandwiches, meringue with lemon curd, beans on toast.