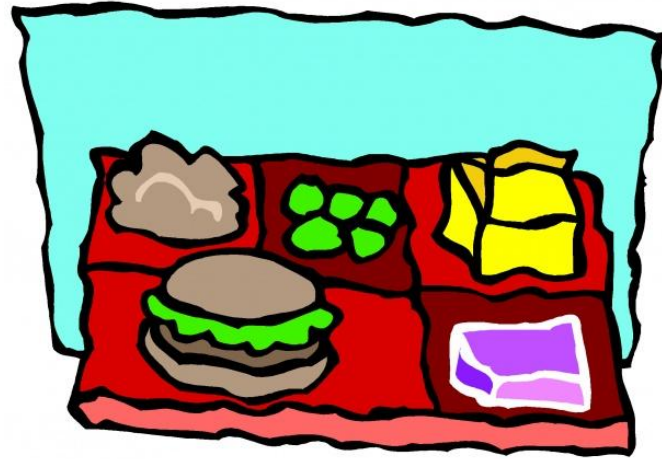


Halal Information Session

January 2019



This session will cover

- Why we are undertaking the consultation
- How the consultation will take place
- The context at Primrose Hill and in Camden
- An understanding of what halal meat is and the practices around this
- What can be offered by the Catering provider
- Other relevant questions



Why hold this consultation?

- Response to parent and child feedback about inequality of choice
- Understanding that many other Camden schools provide a halal offer
- To gauge the views of our community and then discuss results with Governors to determine next steps

Our current menu allows a meat / fish or vegetarian option and we are able to cater for children with allergies. Our catering provider Caterlink adheres Government's School Food Standards.



The Options

The Governing Body agreed to consult with the school community about a halal service. The options to consider based on the feedback are:

- To introduce a full halal service
- To introduce a dual-service
- To remain non halal

The Process

- Initial letter
- Online survey
- Information on website
- Camden Halal Brochure available
- Information Briefing
- Governing Body decision after evaluating feedback

Parents can also email me directly if they would like to elaborate on their views further, or if there is any difficulty accessing the survey you should have received by text.

Our School Context

More and more children have asked me about having a halal option and think it is unfair they can not eat a meat option.

As a school I have worked hard to improve the standard of the food for all, both meat and vegetarian options, because every child's health and wellbeing is a priority for the school, and for some of the children, lunch is the most important meal of the day.

We aim to promote a healthy relationship with food and as a school we have obtained a Healthy Schools Silver Award and are working towards our Gold Award.

Most community schools in Camden have now decided to opt for either dual or Halal.

For some Muslim children, especially those who have eating difficulties or allergies as do many children across the school, further limiting their food options has a negative impact on their food intake (with knock on effects on their energy and learning).

We aim to be as inclusive as possible and aim for no child or family to feel left out. Whatever the outcome, we are relying on our wonderfully diverse and tolerant parent community to have a sensitive and gentle discussion about a subject that we know can be emotive for different reasons.



Our Context & Ethos

- We are a non-denominational/secular school with a diverse population.
- Our children come from many different backgrounds:

40 languages and 26 ethnicities and the following identified religions:

Muslim 35%	Christian 27%	Jewish 3%	Sikh 0.21%	Not specified 26.74%	No religion 11.21%	Unclassified 7.19%
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- We aim to promote children's knowledge, respect, tolerance of diverse religions, cultures, backgrounds, and to find the commonalities between us all.
- We aim for all of our children to be secure and confident in who they are and in their cultural, religious, familial and geographical ties.
- We follow the Human Rights Respecting School principles, encouraging children to be aware of their rights and responsibilities
- For many of our children, being limited to just a vegetarian option can be viewed as a minor disadvantage from a human rights framework. However, the right of parents to educate their children according to their own religious and philosophical beliefs, and therefore not have an unwanted religious diet imposed upon them, is also a right. Balancing these rights can only be done sensibly AFTER gathering feedback on parent/carer views.

Camden community schools which currently provide a halal service:

- Argyle (full)
- Beckford (full)
- Brecknock (dual)
- Carlton (full)
- Christopher Hatton (dual)
- Edith Neville (full)
- Fleet (dual)
- Kingsgate (full)
- Netley (full)
- Regent High (full)
- Richard Cobden (dual)
- Rhyl (full)
- Torriano (dual)
- Haverstock (full)



Camden's Policy of Halal provision within school meals document says:

'The commitment to making Halal provision within the school meals service is an extension of choice within the service appropriate to a specific group within the local community. The provision of this choice will enable significant numbers of pupils to exercise their right to take school meals, which, in the absence of Halal provision, might not be possible for them.'

And 40% of Islington Schools offer a halal option

What is Halal meat?

- Halal is an Arabic word meaning lawful or permitted. In reference to food, it is the dietary standard, as prescribed in the Qur'an (the Muslim scripture).
- 84 – 88% of Halal meat in the UK comes from animals that have been stunned before being slaughtered (RSPCA). Caterlink adhere to this policy on a 'stun to stun' basis rather than 'stun to kill' basis.
- Animals must be alive and healthy at the time of slaughter and all blood is drained from the carcass. During the process, a Muslim will recite a dedication, known as tasmiya or shahada.
- Animals must not see others being slaughtered.
- Some halal meat is slaughtered in exactly the same way as non-halal save for blessing.

All Methods of Slaughter in the UK

Penetrating captive bolt - used on cattle, sheep and some pigs. A gun fires a metal bolt into the brain of the animal causing the animal to lose consciousness immediately.

Electrical tongs- used on sheep, calves and pigs. An electrical current is passed through the animal's brain & heart via a large pair of tongs

Electrical bath – poultry/chicken - dipped in water bath where they receive an electrical shock before the birds to a mechanical neck cutter, which cuts the major blood vessels in the neck.

Gas killing - of pigs, & chickens/poultry - Animals are exposed to high concentrations of gas (currently carbon dioxide).

Stunning (usually with electrical current as above & causes an animal to lose consciousness) then **Sticking** (when an animal's neck is cut, using a very sharp knife, to sever the major blood vessels in its neck/chest with rapid blood loss)

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Service Types & Guidance

Camden's Policy of Halal provision within school meals document says:

The cheapest option is to have a service which is **fully Halal** in all aspects of its provision. As well as meeting the specific needs of Muslim pupils this model of service would also be suitable for most non-Muslim children to eat.

In the case where other specific religious or cultural requirements exist, or in the situation where a school governing body/school community wishes to have a non-Halal menu alongside Halal provision, then the service type would need to be a **mixed model** in which specific safeguards and requirements applied.

For all service types, (i.e. both a fully Halal service and a mixed model of service). The following requirements would need to apply:

1. Halal dishes must be prepared and served according to Islamic dietary rules
2. Contractors must have awareness of Islamic dietary rules.
3. In addition to the requirements concerning Halal and Haram food items shown above fats and oils used in the cooking process must be entirely of vegetable origin.
4. Additives, preservatives, gelatine or gelling agents and colouring must be approved as suitable for Halal provision.
5. Red meat and poultry must have been slaughtered in accordance with Islamic laws and certified as such and stunned before slaughter. Contractors will be required to supply certification as to Halal authenticity and the provision of meat hygiene certification in line with FSA or other standards.
6. Contractors will obtain meat from approved Halal suppliers, producing evidence where required and will not allow substitution of non-Halal products in cases where Halal items cannot be supplied.

What does a dual model service mean?

1. All equipment and utensils used in the preparation, handling and storage of Halal meat and meals must be identifiable and always be kept separate from the ones used for non-Halal meals.
2. Every item of equipment and utensils must be thoroughly cleaned after use and stored separately.
3. Halal meat and meals must be identifiable and must be stored separately from non-Halal meat and meals. Any Halal goods coming in contact with non-Halal material are to be considered to be Haram.
5. Separate containers, shelves and trolleys must always be used to store and transport Halal items.
6. Storage and cooking of Halal food should ideally be in separate fridges and/or cookers.
7. Where a mixed model of service is adopted then Halal meat dishes should be served from containers and with implements identified (e.g. by colour) as only for Halal use. Halal meat must be situated on the serving counter well away from non-Halal meat and meat products. Potatoes or vegetables may be placed in the middle
8. Whilst cross contamination needs to be avoided, using separate cooking equipment and utensils, the same staff can prepare Halal meals and serve them.
9. Finally, it is acknowledged that Halal provision needs to be developed and prepared based on trust between everyone involved in serving and using the meals service. This will require transparency in the management and delivery of the service so that all stakeholders can receive the reassurance required on the nature of the service. Compliance with requirements for Halal meals will form part of the Council's monitoring process for ensuring high standards and quality in school meals. Parental inspection are welcome, where parents/guardians wish to do so.

Key Points raised so far....

What are the animal welfare standards through Caterlink sourced products?

Both halal and non-halal meat are sourced through Red Tractor apart from halal turkey which has a separate provider.

Can Caterlink provide for other dietary requirements, such as kosher?

This does not take place in Camden Schools but in other Caterlink schools in other boroughs. Camden are intending to pursue this option.

Key points raised so far....

Are there cost implications?

There are no changes to the cost of meals for families for either a complete halal and dual service. School would be liable for the purchase of new small equipment. Camden would fund the capital costs for new larger scale equipment and appliances.

What is the school attitude to meat-eating given recent recommendations?

This has not been considered as we follow the National Food Standards although Caterlink are proposing a Veggie Day once per week.

Has the school considered a full vegetarian option?

No, this is not an option with our current catering provider, nor have Caterlink had requests for this in any of their schools London wide. There is an option of a Veggie day per week.

Key Points for and against halal

Main Reasons for:

- Pupil Welfare (children eating more)
- Inclusion (less children excluded from options)

Main Reasons Against

- Animal Welfare (pain if not stunned)
- Imposition of religious requirements in a non-religious school and on children whose parents oppose Halal practices (if fully Halal option chosen)

Questions asked during the meeting not address during presentation:

Q1. What is the process for closing the consultation?

The closing date for the survey would be extended to allow people to complete the questionnaire. The results will be collated and the Governing Body will then discuss and decide the outcome based on this.

Q2. What would be the next steps?

Any changes would involve an audit by Camden, which will take time, then some building works (minor) and capital funding would come from Camden. The school would be liable for the utensils and crockery involved. There is no clear time scale available for this, but it would not be quick or up and running immediately.

Q3. How significant is the survey?

All the results will go to the GB, the percentage for and the percentage against and the comments featured, which will inform the ensuing discussion.

Q4. Is it a democratic vote?

Yes.

Q5. Is there any information on the numbers of children this would affect?

There are 165 Muslim recorded children in school, but there are a further number of families who have chosen not to disclose their religion that would be happy for their children to eat Halal meat.

Q6. Is the Halal meat labelled? Is the labelled stunned option guaranteed?

Caterlink only uses stunned, so all Halal meat would be stunned but would be able to recover should the slaughtering process be halted.

Questions asked during the meeting not address during presentation:

Q7. Is there a cost implication for the school for a dual kitchen?

The only cost to the school would be for the small utensils, not the major cooking equipment.

Q8. The survey was very limiting in its options for responding. In the light of this very useful information, could the process be done again – we are more aware now, and I certainly would vote differently.

We would consider options.

Q9. If it was a full Halal option, that means that all Kosher and other children would not be able to eat it.

This is correct which is why a dual option is being proposed.

Q10. Why can't we have a full vegetarian kitchen?

This idea has not been raised before this consultation process. It's not a debate we can have now, it is for further down the line. The GB would need to do more research into this before we could open up that debate.