

Considering outsourcing your CATERING SERVICE *

It is important to spend time understanding your needs and preparing your vision for your catering before choosing who is best to deliver it.



*There are many reasons why you may consider outsourcing your catering including: **improving quality, greater innovation, training and development** and, of course, **cost**. It is therefore important to be very clear about your objectives from the start.

Agree your objectives and *decide* your schools individual needs:

- **food and service style:** what type and style of food do you want during each service?
- **innovation:** what will help pupil and parent satisfaction with catering?
- **pastoral care:** what service do you want to provide to your pupils? Family service may be integral to the pastoral care you offer younger pupils, but older age groups might prefer more choice and a greater degree of self-service.
- **feedback:** what do your pupils want? It is worth finding out through a survey of both parents and pupils what the current opinion is and what future development they might like.



How will an outsourced service operate?

Once you understand what you want, you can begin to consider who may be the right partner. Cultural fit is extremely important and the caterer must be able to demonstrate a thorough understanding of you and your school. Finding the right caterer will allow you to focus on your core objectives and remove the day-to-day complexities of the catering service.



Remember that your current catering team are an integral part of the school:

Whether you continue to employ the team directly or TUPE them to a contractor. Your existing employees will need careful management through a change that they haven't chosen for themselves.



Outsourcing will give you:

- food and service quality
- innovation and food development
- human resources and safeguarding
- training and development of the team
- food and health safety
- purchasing and stock control
- budget management
- potential capital investment

The next step

If you do decide to contract out, the starting point is a clear specification of the service you require. Caterers can then be invited to review your current provision, discuss your requirements and submit a proposal or tender depending on your preference.

From this you can invite a shortlist of caterers to present their proposals to a selection panel. This is a good opportunity to meet the team who will run the contract and, for you to ask questions about their proposal.

Once you have chosen your preferred caterer, contract negotiation can begin

Getting the contract right

The most common form of contract operated within the independent school sector is known as "cost plus".



Under this arrangement, as the client, you will pay for all costs relating to the contract regardless of whether or not they are budgeted. It is possible to guarantee some areas of expenditure. However a robust specification and contract agreement are essential tools to objectively monitor and control the contract moving forward.

It is equally important to maintain regular communication with your caterer, and their support team, to ensure your original vision for catering is delivered as well as continually developing your service.

Want to find out more?

If you want a caterer that can bring an exciting food focus to your school, take care of your legal obligations and support your employees through a journey of change – then, choose **Brookwood!**

Brookwood has 20 years of experience in providing a catering service within the education sector. If you are thinking about outsourcing and would like to know more, please contact us for a no obligation chat.