



United in Purpose

Catering Services for Schools





**You are at
the heart of
everything we do**

As Britain's largest local authority trading company (LATCO), putting people at the heart of our services is integral to Norse Group's values. In the world of school meals, this means we prioritise the health and wellbeing of children and young people.

We know the positive outcomes a good quality meal at lunchtime can bring to learning, attainment, health, and happiness. Research by Children's Food Trust has shown that if children eat better, they perform better in school.

You are searching for a school meal provision that meets the needs of your children and matches your school ethos. We understand you want your Catering Account Manager to be just a phone call away and a locally based team to back them up; the sort of personal attention you would expect from a service provision.

Let us demonstrate what we offer and why we would be a good fit for your school...



Our catering services at a glance.



The only truly **local** catering provider in Norfolk



Our menus are created using local and seasonal produce sourced from **East Anglia**



Experienced Account Managers



We have a **menu development team** to ensure our menus are varied, interesting and appeal to children



We have a **robust allergen aware procedure** for children who require special diets



Menu promotions throughout the academic year with an emphasis on having fun with food



Bronze level food for life accreditation



Children engagement through **menu tasters** and meeting with **student councils**



Parent engagement with pop-up tasting events and surveys



We care about **green matters** and can provide kitchens with **smart meters** to monitor and help reduce energy usage



We comply with the **school food standards**



Training and upskilling of our catering teams is delivered by Norse Learning & Development

Our People

We provide our teams with job satisfaction that they are giving back to their community and improving people's lives. Working with Norse, you will have a dedicated Account Manager who will support the school, develop the environment, people, and overall mealtime experience for your children.

We have a higher-than-average ratio of managers to kitchens. **This directly benefits you as you will see your Account Manager more regularly** and they will commit more time to ensuring your catering service is always performing well.

- Our people are fundamental to our success. We recruit, train, and empower people to be the best they can
- We have an award-winning Learning and Development department to provide accredited courses as well as personal and professional development
- Our local staff can step in and cover absence at short notice to avoid any disruption to your school day
- All our staff have **enhanced DBS checks**
- Norse Group is a truly local contractor, employing over 600 people in the catering division alone.

norse
wellness

Our people deserve to live well alongside the business which is what we ensure by paying the national living wage.

We further bolster our commitment to our people by having MHFAs (Mental Health First Aiders) throughout the business, with nine alone in Catering. We also provide free access to Health Assured, our staff wellbeing programme and provide free resources with the Norse Group road to wellness initiative.

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group

Our Menu

Lunchtime is an opportunity for children to socialise in a relaxed environment and develop social skills that will remain for the rest of their lives.

We are proud of our menus and prioritise a high-quality lunch service using fresh, locally sourced, sustainable ingredients.

Our partnership will give you the confidence that the food your children are eating is nutritious and tastes great.

- Over **75%** of our menus are cooked fresh every day.
- The menu changes twice a year and always includes new dishes to ensure variety.
- We have reduced the sugar content in all our dessert recipes by **25%** in line with the government drive to reduce sugar and childhood obesity.
- Up to **50%** of our desserts contain fresh fruit.
- Our homemade pizzas and bread contain **wholemeal flour** to support a balanced diet.
- Being **flexible** allows us to provide variety and minor adjustments to menus to suit your school needs as well as supporting a reduction in plate waste.
- Our kitchen teams have recipe cards which include portion control guidelines for each meal, this ensures compliance with the **School Food Standards** and has the benefit of reducing daily **food waste**.

Try our famous
Beetroot Brownie recipe
for yourself...



We utilise **Cypad Kitchen Manager**, a web-based, paperless system that covers all the administrative functions that are carried out in our school kitchens. It is highly innovative and looks after the ordering, reporting and kitchen management for all our kitchen teams. **This means the kitchen team spend less time filling out forms and paperwork and spend more time preparing and serving great tasting food for your children.**



We have held bronze level Food for Life accreditation for **13 consecutive years**, demonstrating our commitment to cooking from scratch with quality ingredients.



Our Suppliers

Buying fresh, locally sourced products not only enables us to deliver a fantastic, high quality catering service but also helps to deliver great value to our clients whilst helping sustain the local supply chain and support our farming community.

We work with our suppliers to look at ways in which we can reduce energy usage and transportation costs whilst minimising the all-important food miles for our customers.



When specific food items are experiencing a stock shortage and price increase, we monitor this with our suppliers, communicate with clients and adapt in order to control food costs.

Partnering with local suppliers like Barsby Produce, we support regional economies and promote sustainable sourcing practices. Barsby's mission for sourcing fresh, local produce aligns seamlessly with Norse's ethos, fostering a mutually beneficial relationship rooted in shared values. Moreover, Norse embraces innovative solutions such as Cool Food Pro, a carbon calculator that enables caterers to reduce their environmental footprint by incorporating alternative proteins and tracking carbon savings.

Sustainability

Having supported British Food Fortnight for several years, we are part of the Love British Food education working group, championing school meals and advocating for better across the school meal industry.

Beyond the kitchen, Norse Group is working to improve our sustainability and reduce our carbon footprint throughout the supply chain. In 2023, Norse Group awarded the PPE and Workwear supply contract to SMI, whose Rokwear range, developed in line with the new Global Recycled Standard certification, will account for 80% of the Group's workwear requirements.

In addition, Norse Group recently introduced OdorBac, a non-toxic and biodegradable cleaning solution, meaning that even when lunchtime is over, we can maintain a clean and hygienic workplace without compromising our commitment to the environment and the wellbeing of our employees, pupils, and clients.

With every meal served, Norse Group reaffirms its pledge to a healthier, more sustainable future for all.





Catering for all

It is important for us to feed all children tasty and nutritious school lunches as safely as possible. We take special diets very seriously and have an industry-leading Allergen Aware menu which is free of most of the top 14 legal allergens. We also provide parents with an allergen matrix for our standard menu as well as nutritional reports so they can make fully informed choices for their children.

Our Allergen Aware Steering Group brings together parents of children with special diets, our menu team, and an independent school food nutritionist to sense-check our menus and discuss ideas to ensure children with allergies and intolerances are represented and catered for safely.

For any children who require texture modified diets we provide our kitchen teams professional training on Eating, Drinking and Swallowing (EDS) and provide suitable menus using the International Dysphasia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI) framework.

Also unique to Norse is that we provide picture menus for the standard and allergen menu as we understand how useful they are for children of all ages and backgrounds to help them make an informed choice as well as providing parents more visibility of our menus.

I think the allergen aware menu looks great, lots of meals my daughter will enjoy. It is great to see lots of naturally gluten free meals on there too - rice and potatoes always go down well. I'm also pleased to see a good variety of puddings.

Marketing and Promotions

We truly believe school meals offer a pathway for children to try new foods with their friends. Every academic year, we create a promotions calendar that includes fun and engaging themes and seasonal events to help promote healthy choices, increase the uptake of school meals, and encourage children to try something new.

We also take part in national promotions such as British Food Fortnight, Eat Them to Defeat Them and National School Meals Week where we send educational activity sheets to schools, informative and engaging posters, and recipes to share with parents and the wider school community. We find this helps widen children and young people's knowledge of where food comes from and what a balanced diet looks like.



We are proud of our partnership with Norwich City Football Club's Community Sports Foundation. Together we are committed to enhance nutritional education, physical health, and wellbeing for local children with various initiatives.

We run competitions with children as these initiatives can help educate on wider issues. Our Design a School Lunch competition encourages children to consider the importance of health and sustainable eating. Our Big Tidy Up competition invites children to look after the environment and pursue activities such as recycling and litter picking.

Meal uptake increases **17%** on average when we run a themed menu in schools

We won the Marketing Award 2024 at LACA's (the school food people) Excellence Awards for our engaging and creative marketing plan.

Engaging with our young customers

Children and young people are at the heart of school meals, so it is vital they are part of our decision making and, in the process, they are empowered to make healthy choices, understand nutrition, and lead their happiest and healthiest lives.

Following our Flourish pledge with Norfolk Children's Services in July 2022 to consult with school children on what they want to see on school menus, our engagement with children and young people has gone from strength to strength.

We pledged to make student councils an integral part of our primary school menu development.

The approach has been twofold:

- Running taste tests of recipes with children
- Attending student council meetings to talk to children about what they enjoy on the menu, what they don't enjoy and what they would like to see on the next menu

This is collated centrally and shared with the menu development team and promotions team so we can see ways in which we can accommodate requests, look for patterns and consider ideas from school children.

Year on year we meet with more student councils and facilitate more taster events. Our schools are aware of these engagement opportunities and are seeing the benefit it can bring to 'hearing the child's voice' and giving them autonomy on their school meals.

In addition to in-person events, we can send electronic surveys to schools for their parents to complete and provide feedback on the quality, variety, what their children say about school meals and any menu ideas they have themselves. This direct insight into parent opinion really helps us shape a great catering offer and opens important conversations with the wider school community.



We won the **'Understood'** category at the 2023 Flourish Awards which was voted for by children and young people in Norfolk.



90% of parents are more likely to choose school meals after trying it for themselves

Engaging with parents

We recognise that if parents haven't seen or tried our food for themselves, they may be less likely to encourage their children to try school meals. It is important to challenge outdated perceptions and demonstrate the quality and variety of school meals. We achieve this by supporting schools with parents' evenings and new intake events where we provide menu tasters and essential information on our school meal service.

Parent feedback...


My children already enjoy their school meals but I will encourage them to try more options now I know how tasty they are!

Lovely to see lots of vegetables used in the main courses.

Thank you for the opportunity for us to try the foods, it is very helpful!

We welcomed this collaboration with Norse as it opened up conversations around food and nutrition with our children.

Headteacher at Fairhaven Primary School on the Eco Lunch Competition

A young girl with dark hair in a ponytail, wearing a white school uniform, is smiling broadly at a table. On the table, there is a white tray with a salad and a small bowl of orange juice. In the background, another girl is partially visible, also smiling.

The menu was great and the staff in the kitchen made it so enjoyable and memorable. The food was delicious, and the homemade cakes were so tasty, the effort your staff put into preparing these dishes is outstanding all being prepared and cooked fresh each day is inspiring. Nothing is ever too much.

Old Catton Junior School

Partnership Approach

At Norse Group, we create environments where ideas and knowledge are shared and voices are heard.

We bring a partnership approach, local management team and experience gained from running a school catering operation across Norfolk for over 30 years.

- We understand each school we work with is unique so we will be accommodating and flexible.
- Your local Catering Account Manager will be supported by a mobile relief team as well as a central team consisting of Administrators, Marketing and Comms, Compliance and Quality and a Senior Management Team.
- We have processes to monitor performance and will deliver continuous improvement.
- We will have a shared commitment to sustainable practises, including waste management, portion control and development of environmentally friendly recipes.
- We value our partners, staff, children, and young people as individuals and respect the contribution they make to the success of our catering service.

Norse Group was born from the public sector for the public good. We are not solely motivated by profit but a mission to improve the lives of children and young people by providing well-balanced, nutritious, and tasty meals that will enhance their school journey.

For more information on our catering services please contact Melanie Hides, Head of Catering, on **07850 637776** or **melanie.hides@norsegroup.co.uk**. For a quotation please contact Mark Gallant, Business Development Manager, on **07834 808470** or **mark.gallant@norsegroup.co.uk**



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