

**P-05-865 Guarantee fully plant-based options on every public sector menu,  
Correspondence – Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council to Committee,  
13.09.19**

Flying Start settings have a question in their registration packs that ask parents/carers about providing information about their child's dietary needs and providers would work with families to ensure these requirements are met

Those settings undertaking the Healthy and Sustainable Pre-school Scheme are encouraged where possible to use local, seasonal fruit and vegetables and to plant and grow vegetables that can be eaten by the children and also to have developed a written food policy.

The majority of settings have the Healthy Snack award and whilst this does not stipulate that a vegan option is provided at all times it does consider the dietary needs of children.

Settings also work to the latest Food and Nutrition Guidance for childcare settings from Welsh Government. The guidance is part of the planned Healthy Weight, Healthy Wales strategy. There is guidance within this regarding vegan diets and sustainable food checklists on which is followed.

Within the school arena we endeavour to provide a service to every pupil. This is very much inclusive of those pupils who choose to consume a vegetarian or vegan diet, whether this is religious or ethically based.

Within the current menu setting for primary schools, there is no plant based option offered as the norm. However, parents are able to make contact with the schools catering manager and request a specific diet if they so wish. We do ask for a written request, this is purely to be able to have traceability of permission. This is for all diets which fall away from the mainstream menu and not due to medical purposes.

Diets which are restricted from the main menu for medical purposes require medical documentation to support any said allergy / intolerance.

Currently within the county borough there are many parents who have requested a vegetarian (lacto-ovo vegetarian) menu, but none as yet that have requested a totally plant based (vegan ) menu. There are available items that would be suitable should the need arise.

Alternative menus remain as close as possible to the mainstream menu, so that the pupil doesn't feel any different to their peer(s).

Within the comprehensive school arena, the catering department provides more options on a daily basis and it would be possible to have a plant based diet without request. Here pupils have more autonomy to make their own choices. In any case, if a pupil or parent made themselves known, then again, as per primary school setting, a menu would be provided for / specifications provided for in order for the pupil to have more choice rather than a restricted one meal choice.

Kind regards