

Food and Drink purchased 'Through the School Gate'

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Transcript

School 1 Kitchen supervisor

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Respondent1: Do you want me to spell it?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent1: Harry, Smith.

Interviewer: How do you spell your surname, sorry?

Respondent1: Smith. S-M-I-T-H. And I'm a head chef.

Interviewer: Head chef. Thank you.

Respondent2: Adam Johnson. A-D-A-M J-O-H-N-S-O-N. Cook.

Interviewer: Thank you. So just before we start are you happy to take part? Do you consent to us recording you and...?

Respondent2: Yeah, no problem.

Respondent1: That's fine, yeah.

Interviewer: It will only be the research team that have access to the data and everything you say is confidential. Okay?

Respondent2: That's all right.

Respondent1: Yeah.

Interviewer: Cool. Thank you. We are just interested in hearing a bit about the food policies that you have at school, so what influences what you cook, what your policies are, what your menus are and that kind of thing. How you choose what food you cook and sell and do you have any restrictions.

So kind of who decides your food policies, is it you or is it...?

Respondent1: Executive chef of the company.

Interviewer: Executive chef. Of the company?

Respondent1: Of the company, yeah.

Interviewer: So does that company cater for lots of schools?

Respondent1: Yeah.

Respondent2: Yeah.

Respondent1: Yeah, they do, yeah.

Interviewer: So they decide what you're cooking?

Respondent1: That's right.

Interviewer: Do you guys have any input at all or is it kind of...?

Respondent1: Not really, because of the allergens, since you know allergens come in highlight, no we don't. We used to decide the menus and this or change the menus, now we can't, it's all done, we just follow the menus, that's it. And the allergens as well.

Interviewer: What sort...?

Respondent1: They in the kitchen. I mean if you want to see all the menus they are in the kitchen. Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. So we saw on the menus outside you have a list of all the allergens that are in there.

Respondent2: Allergens, definitely.

Interviewer: And is that something compulsory that you have to put?

Respondent1: Yeah, yeah, it is.

Respondent2: We have to follow the instruction of the executive chef. What they do they discuss the menu with the head office, and then they send us all the recipe, all the allergen, you have to follow what they say, even if sometimes it is not helpful to do it but we have to do it.

Interviewer: Yeah, have to do it.

Respondent2: Yeah. Especially for allergens, we've got NICE guidance, we have to follow everything. Because even the stuff we purchase we have to follow the code from the...

Respondent1: Yeah, recipes, the code.

Respondent2: From the supplier, we have to give them numbers, they have to give us same items as the recipe.

Interviewer: Okay, so you've got quite a lot of restrictions on actually what you can and can't do.

Respondent2: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: It's very kind of dictated by someone else.

Respondent2: Yeah.

Interviewer: So the policies around food, I know there's things about salt content and whether you can serve battered food, fried food.

Respondent1: Everything is like home-made, made from scratch, we don't buy anything outside, everything has to be done...like made from scratch.

Interviewer: So all the sauces, so the curry sauce is all made from scratch?

Respondent1: All the sauces, yeah, there are no ready-made, we make our own sauce, even tomato sauce, béchamel, everything.

Interviewer: Really?

Respondent1: Yes, which is everything.

Respondent2: Everything from scratch.

Interviewer: And do you use organic products or [inaudible 0:03:40]?

Respondent1: We just have to follow you know the ingredients, I mean the numbers they give us from the supplier, this we have to order that, we have to follow that, we can't order what we want. It's all provided, I mean all the information, we've got books there you look, everything, recipes, there's recipes, allergen, everything we have to follow from that.

Respondent2: Do you want me to get it for you to see how it works?

Respondent1: Yeah, you can see if you want.

Interviewer: Yeah, that would be really good, thank you, yeah.

Respondent2: I will get it for you.

Interviewer: So do they change the menus regularly or...?

Respondent1: Every three months.

Interviewer: Every three months, okay.

Respondent1: And now when we come back after Christmas there's new menus, New Year.

Interviewer: And do they kind of cycle? Do you have like a month...?

Respondent1: Three weeks set menu, yeah. So every three weeks change.

Interviewer: And do the students like the food do you think?

Respondent1: I'm sure they do, yeah. What did you...? I mean you said you had survey earlier, did you...?

Interviewer: We actually haven't seen the results yet.

Respondent1: Ah, okay. I'm sure because most of the kids they eat, they don't go outside, so I mean I'm sure they do.

Interviewer: Do you know roughly how many of the students have the hot meals?

Respondent1: Roughly 700 to 800, yeah, yeah. That's including I mean main meal, vegetarian, jacket potatoes and then hot wraps and sandwiches. I would say 800 to 850.

Interviewer: Okay, that's quite a...

Respondent2: So this is...

Respondent1: That's quite a big number.

Interviewer: How many students are in the school? Is that quite a high...?

Respondent1: I think... Miss, how many students in the school?

Respondent3: Yeah, it's just under 1,000. But that includes sixth form, but more sixth formers have started to stay for lunch, they used to go out, but they've just decided to stay in. I don't know why. They like...they've been here longer, they like just being in.

Respondent1: It means they are enjoy.

Respondent3: So it's probably about 900. You know up to 900 kids who are eligible to eat in.

Respondent1: So that says a lot isn't it?

Interviewer: Yeah, I mean that's a really high portion.

Respondent1: So these are the allergens and the...

Respondent2: So this for example, this is... I'll give you a simple example we have. Like...

Respondent1: Everything is listed in there, this is what...

Respondent2: The cauliflower and chickpea biryani for example, you've got all the recipes with ingredient number.

Interviewer: Oh wow, so it's very detailed.

Respondent1: No recipe is [overspeaking 0:05:54].

Respondent2: When we call supplier we give him this number and he's going to give us this cauliflower, not another one. For example, low salt drum this one, this number, not another number, if you tell him salt he's going to say 'Which number?' You have to give him this one. We've got all the information. How long we need to...I mean to conserve it, everything. Allergen. All the information.

Interviewer: Yeah, so it's very detailed.

Respondent3: Yeah.

Respondent2: Yeah, it's more...

Interviewer: Did you prefer it before when you had a bit more kind of say in the menu?

Respondent1: Freedom.

Interviewer: A bit more freedom or...?

Respondent1: We don't mind actually.

Interviewer: Yeah?

Respondent2: We're both used to it anyway.

Respondent1: Yeah. It was hard at the beginning but now we've got used to it we are [inaudible 0:06:45].

Interviewer: Is it nice food that you serve? Do you like it?

Respondent1: Yeah, yeah, definitely, definitely. You eat, you can say something.

Respondent3: [inaudible 0:06:57].

Respondent2: Our food?

Respondent1: Food is...

Respondent2: I can't say...

Respondent1: We try our best you...I mean...

Respondent2: If you go to eat in other places, basically I used to take food home and sometimes I give my friends and they said 'Oh, are you serious? You are doing this food for kids?'

Respondent1: It's like restaurant style kind, yeah. Have you tasted?

Interviewer: No, no, we haven't. We've just seen it and it smells really good. It looks really nice.

Respondent1: Yeah. It's curry day today.

Respondent2: If you go to other schools they don't have this. I have friends, they are head chefs in other schools and when I tell them like what we are doing they say 'You're crazy', but we have to anyway, like we've been taught to do like [inaudible 0:07:38]. Anyway since she's been here before me and since we...and her, I know we always do the best. It's not like to...but that's how it is since long time.

Interviewer: No, I mean it looks really nice.

Respondent2: That's why they kept the contract anyway.

Respondent1: Yeah.

Interviewer: So how long have you been working?

Respondent1: 2013, since 2013. But I'm working with this company since long time.

Interviewer: Okay. So you...

Respondent1: 2011.

Interviewer: So you came with the company to the school?

Respondent1: Yeah. I was in Brentwood before, they asked me if I can come in here. Because it's more like...it's not like, we still follow the menus, but they like more like spicy, you know? More Asian community, so...

Interviewer: So do you adapt then? Do they adapt the menus according to the area and what the...?

Respondent1: No.

Interviewer: No.

Respondent1: No.

Interviewer: Because you mentioned that it's like more Asian and spicy food here.

Respondent1: But it's like even if you do béchamel sauce, you have to give little bit twist to it, like a little bit...I mean chili, even bolognese, you don't meant to put chili, we still put a little bit of chili. It has to be full of flavours you know, otherwise they complain a lot.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Respondent1: Because Asian kids are used to do the spice.

Interviewer: They're used to the strong flavours aren't they? Yeah.

Respondent2: What our manager said as long as you don't touch allergens and something like which can harm the kids, you can do it, you can do it your way.

Interviewer: Ah, so you...

Respondent1: You can, like a lot of herbs, you know.

Respondent2: Flavours.

Respondent1: I mean spices, they don't have allergens.

Respondent2: For example if you followed the recipe of the sauce, tomato sauce here or any like bolognese or something like that we don't find like herbs, different herbs, but we do thyme, we do basil...

Interviewer: But you add them in, yeah.

Respondent1: Basil.

Respondent2: We do all the herbs.

Respondent1: Coriander.

Respondent2: Because you can't put stock because it contains celery and sulphite.

Respondent1: You can't put celery.

Respondent2: So we have to some...put something...

Respondent1: In tomato sauce you're meant to put celery, but you can't use celery, that's allergen, so then we put a lot of basil, parsley, herbs to make it...taste good.

Respondent2: Herbs, sometimes we put...

Interviewer: Okay, you would add spices and herbs but not salt or allergens. Is that correct?

Respondent1: Yeah, less spices, I would say paprika or like oregano, mixed herbs, then a lot of coriander, a lot of basil.

Respondent2: Basically this salt is less...it contain less...it's not [inaudible 0:10:03].

Interviewer: Oh like low-sodium?

Respondent2: Yeah. This one is like...it's okay, for example it's healthy, it's not like one with...even is expensive, more expensive than the simple one.

Interviewer: Do you have any meals that are particularly popular or particularly unpopular?

Respondent1: Yeah, our wraps are very popular, like vegetarian or meat, meat wraps be very popular.

Interviewer: Are they hot wraps?

Respondent1: Yeah. Curry is very popular, then there is chicken biryani we do, that is very popular. So first day taken off the menus, but then it was high in demand isn't it?

Interviewer: Really?

Respondent1: They were like 'When are you going to put it back on?' That is popular. Then peri-peri chicken, then roast chicken is quite popular.

Respondent2: Yeah. All the chickens are popular.

Respondent1: Tandoori chicken is very popular.

Respondent2: Tandoori as well, yeah.

Respondent1: So you know the things they don't like, I know what they don't like, so I tell Vincent my manager. He's not here today. I tell him that they don't like this, so he's like 'Can't do anything because these are the menus done by executive chef', I say 'Well if they don't like something it's waste of time and money isn't it?' Then I try to remove that from the menu.

Interviewer: Okay. So you kind of observe what the students are eating?

Respondent1: Yeah, I know now exactly what they like, what they don't like, so...

Interviewer: So you're fighting their corner so they get what they like.

Respondent1: Yeah. So every day is like popular now, frittata we used to do...

Respondent2: Yeah, they don't like it.

Respondent1: Yeah. So I just took the rear.

Respondent2: Frittata, toad in the hole.

Respondent1: Yeah. Quiche, they like quiche, home-made quiche, we do like a wholemeal quiche which is this Friday.

Interviewer: Okay. So I know some schools do on a Friday fish and chips on a Friday, is that something you do as well?

Respondent1: Yeah, we do that as well, we do that as well.

Respondent2: Yeah, for meat, but we have to do it for our vegetarian, we do quiche for vegetarian.

Respondent1: We do vegetarian as well as main meal, as well as jacket potatoes.

Interviewer: Oh, so jacket potatoes, is that every day then?

Respondent1: That's every day, every day.

Respondent2: Every day. Jacket comes with different...three type of salad.

Respondent1: Yeah.

Respondent2: Three salad, jacket, this is like the basic every day.

Respondent1: Then main dish, meat dish and vegetarian dish.

Respondent2: Vegetarian dish and dessert we've got yoghurt, mainly yoghurt...

Respondent1: All food is popular in here.

Respondent2: Fruit salad and cake.

Respondent1: All is very popular.

Respondent2: Three type of dessert. I mean we give them choice.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent1: And desserts as well. So like cake of the day, then we do fruit salad, then we do yoghurt with...Greek yoghurt with peach, then we do jellies.

Respondent2: Mousse.

Respondent1: Mousse, jellies.

Interviewer: So there's a good selection.

Respondent1: Yeah, they have like five, six different...

Interviewer: We didn't see any prices for the pudding, does that come with the main?

Respondent1: It comes with a main.

Interviewer: So £2 is for the main and pudding?

Respondent1: £2 and the pudding, yeah.

Respondent2: Yeah, everything. Plus soup.

Respondent1: Plus soup as well.

Interviewer: Wow, so the meal deal is £2?

Respondent2: Yeah.

Interviewer: Wow.

Respondent1: And then you know side veg as well as salad, everything.

Interviewer: So all of that's included?

Respondent1: All that for £2.

Respondent2: We've got meat...the...I mean curry, plus carbs.

Respondent1: With rice.

Respondent2: Plus veg, plus soup, plus salad.

Respondent1: Dessert plus...

Respondent2: Plus dessert. Everything £2.

Respondent1: Plus there is...what do you call it? The spicy...

Respondent2: Yeah, flavour...

Respondent1: Flavour zone.

Respondent2: Flavour zone.

Respondent1: We have flavour zone.

Interviewer: I've seen the chili flakes.

Respondent1: Chili flakes, pumpkin seeds...

Respondent2: Chilies, pumpkin seed.

Respondent1: Sunflower seeds, all them, so that's top up.

Respondent2: For example today we had a Rogan Josh...

Respondent1: Then you have mango chutney as well with...

Respondent2: Yeah. We give mango chutney as well.

Interviewer: And raita I think.

Respondent1: And raita as well, yeah.

Respondent2: As well we give them raita. It's yoghurt we've made...

Respondent1: Today was raita, yeah.

Interviewer: I saw the salad.

Respondent2: It cost but it's more flavour for...

Interviewer: So do you have much waste at the end of lunchtime or do you...?

Respondent1: Not much.

Respondent2: No, no.

Interviewer: Have you kind of got it bang on?

Respondent1: We know our...

Respondent2: We know...

Respondent1: I'm working since long so I know exactly what numbers. So it's difficult, you know when it's Eid, Eid, Muslim festival.

Respondent2: Ramadan, Ramadan, Ramadan is hard because most of them they are fasting.

Respondent1: So then they...then you cut down, this down, it's different, but usually you know the numbers. I mean after Christmas is calm down a little bit, so you get used to...

Interviewer: Yeah, so kind of work out when...

Respondent1: According to...yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: The items that you recognise that they don't like and you try to take off, can you add anything in if you take something off or...?

Respondent1: Yeah. I mean we have recipes, like I always talk to my manager, if they don't like something then he will say 'Let me...I'll get back to you [inaudible 0:14:43]', then he provide me three or four different recipes, so I know what they like, I just change that to...swap.

Interviewer: Yeah. So there's some flexibility for you to kind of argue for an option that they like?

Respondent1: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, I always doing it, if they don't like something I always...

Interviewer: It's good they have your voice.

Respondent1: Yeah, I mean...you know I'm a feeder, so if they don't like something it's like waste of time, you're wasting time, effort and everything, they don't like, what's the point of cooking it?

Interviewer: Yeah, exactly.

Respondent2: Most of them when they change the menu, when this happened, when they change it then after we see and the menu, when they give us new menu and we say like 'Oh this one is not popular...'

Respondent1: There is always...

Respondent2: Then manager decide to give us other options, then we decide which option is the best, because our head office, our executive chef, he don't know...

Interviewer: No, he doesn't know your [inaudible 0:15:36].

Respondent2: Yeah, we know...

Respondent1: Yeah, they don't know, yeah.

Respondent2: So...that's it.

Interviewer: Yeah, brilliant. Has anyone got any questions? I think that's everything from us.

Respondent1: Sure?

Interviewer: Yeah, no, thank you very much, that was very useful.

Respondent1: Thank you. Would you like something to try? Order a meal? I'll see if there's any left, biryani.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you, thank you very much.

Interviewer: Go on then, we'll have a little try.

Respondent1: You wait here. I'll send...

END OF AUDIO