



## COUNTERS & FOOD DISPLAY EDUCATERING NOVEMBER 2015

*Please attribute any quotes to Kris Brearley, Sales Director, R H Hall*

### ***How important are counters and food displays in primary and secondary school dining areas?***

Counters and displays in schools offer both functionality and an attractive centrepiece for the dining area. A good counter or display can ensure that foods are kept at their optimum serving conditions, keeping them looking at their best – either at specific serving times (e.g. lunchtime) or throughout the day, hour after hour. Add to this the potential for custom branding and attractive food displays. In order to promote healthy eating, all schools should have a full serving area to make pupils aware of the food on offer.

### ***How can counters and food displays make the dining area more appealing to pupils?***

Creative display and merchandising of food/meals can definitely enhance and increase appeal to pupils, especially if you want to encourage children to choose the healthiest options. Colourful branding can draw the eye and showing food in a creative way – maybe even using themed displays - can help pupils make right choices. Wrongly presented and it can have the opposite effect! Good internal lighting will also help to catch children's eyes and enhance the food display – bringing dishes more to life with added vibrancy. (Do check though that the lights won't overheat the foods in refrigerated displays). Some models have been further enhanced features, including glazed cabinet ends which offer even more product visibility. Enclosed cabinets also allow the opportunity for children to get closer to the foods without the risk of contamination from touching fingers or coughs and sneezes!

### ***Is it important to show pupils the dishes on offer before they buy?***

Absolutely! Seeing (and even smelling!) the food on offer will help children decide on their chosen lunch, and this choice will encourage more pupils to take part in school lunches. This helps to promote healthy meal choices and ensures children are being fed well.

### ***Are counters and food displays changing in schools?***

There is certainly a realisation that functionality, or indeed cost, are not necessarily the most important factors. Whilst food safety and usability of the cabinet are key, there is also an importance being placed on the appearance of the display. More sites are looking to bespoke options, some with branding.

### ***What are the key considerations for installing counters and food displays in schools?***

Schools need to consider how the inclusion of counters and food display cabinets in their lunchtime offering will be of real benefit to the service – especially in terms of pupil throughput and lunchtime turnaround. The number and age of pupils is also a consideration – will having too much on offer cause a degree of delay and confusion with children of a younger age? Safety is also a consideration – can products be safely reached if looking at self-service options?

Also schools need to consider their type of operation and the foods/menu items suitable for display and think about future needs too as well as present. Will closed back-service display cabinets suit better than self-service options? Also, how will these options fit in with any existing servery/counters?

***Please include any other comments that you feel our readers will be interested in***

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