



Headteacher: Miss Jane Linch

Park Road, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire, WD3 1HU

Tel: (01923) 770265

Fax: (01923) 776558

[www.rickmansworthpark.herts.sch.uk](http://www.rickmansworthpark.herts.sch.uk)

e-mail: [admin@rickmansworthpark.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@rickmansworthpark.herts.sch.uk)

21<sup>st</sup> October 2022

Dear Hertfordshire Catering

### Packaging and food sourcing

We are a group of primary school children aged between 6 and 10, supporting the UN Global Goals. We are campaigning for a more sustainable world. That includes us learning about food production and consumption and educating our wider community on these issues.

As you are the main food provider in our school, we would like to know whether you have a policy on plastic packaging or food sourcing. On a recent visit to Woodoaks Farm in Herts, we learned about the benefit of buying food locally for freshness and environmental benefit. Cutting the air miles of travel is important for reducing carbon emissions. Is this something that Herts Catering considers when buying food? Do you support UK/local producers when you can?

Did you know that in 2021 80% of apples consumed in the U.K were imported?

We look forward to hearing about your environmental and sustainability credentials.

Yours sincerely

*Natalia Maggie Carolina Samuel K*  
*Liana Miley Molly Sam S Logan*  
*Imogen Aiden Jordan William*

Rickmansworth Park Global goals group





## Rickmansworth Park Global Goals Group

### Rickmansworth Park JMI School

Park Road,  
Rickmansworth,  
Hertfordshire,  
WD3 1HU

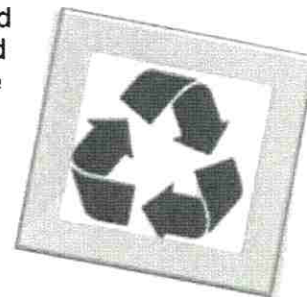
Dear Rickmansworth Park Global Goals Group,

Thank you so much for writing to HCL (Hertfordshire Catering Limited) and expressing your views on single use plastic and food sourcing. It is always great to hear from young eco warriors passionate about sustainability and the protection of the environment. As you will see, HCL shares your passion on sustainability and protecting the environment too!

Our journey starts with our core values;

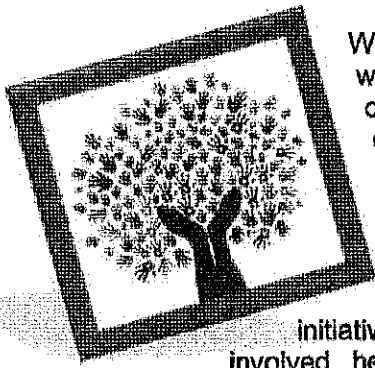
1) HCL is committed to being **Socially Responsible** and this means that we will make choices that best support our communities, people and planet. We act on this by working with sustainable suppliers that have packaging products that are made from either wood pulp or corn and the film used in all our windowed and laminated packaging is an environmentally friendly alternative to plastic that is derived from renewable corn – starch. These products are designed to be compostable with food waste and so you'll be glad to know that all our HCL branded packaging is compostable and biodegradable. Our policy is that we will always try to avoid using oil-based plastics where at all possible.

As part of our continued effort to reduce our use of single plastic we have eliminated the ordering of single use plastic in all our disposable ordering forms. This includes cutlery, sporks, plates and bowls.

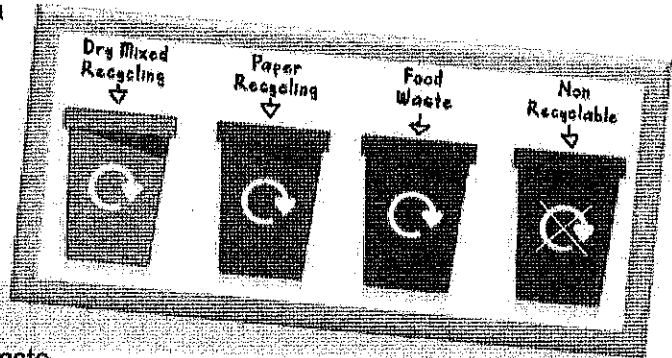


In addition, HCL is always keen to support schools to achieve their **sustainable goals as well** and have recently helped a secondary school introduce ceramic plates with metal cutlery for their main meals and their grab and go food. Items will be served in compostable and biodegradable containers and cutlery is provided by another one of our supply partners, Vegware.

2) HCL also **Care About Our Customers** and aim to make our customers everyday experience our priority.



When HCL starts new contracts with schools, our dedicated teams work with the schools to consider their sustainability and environmental impact of services at all stages. These include menu development, consumption and waste disposal. HCL then agrees practices to reduce the risk of environmental harm and promote sustainable practises. For example, HCL has worked with schools to reduce landfill waste, by introducing a waste management initiative. This involved helping change behaviour of the students by getting them to split all waste into plastics, tins, cardboard and foods. This allows our waste management supplier to correctly dispose of recycled waste and ultimately reduce landfill waste.



This has been a successful initiative where schools have been actively involved and can see the benefits of sustainable practise, particularly where they have no recycling contract. In fact, this scheme has proven to be so successful that HCL has seen a 25% uptake in our Secondary Schools implementing this initiative.

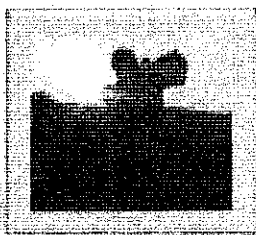
In addition, HCL are trailing an anaerobic food digester/composter in a school. Anaerobic digestion is a process by which microorganisms break down biodegradable material. The pilot scheme is in one of our Primary Schools, where we have provided them with a state-of-the-art digester composter which 'eats' our kitchen food waste turning it into composting material within a matter of days. This amazing piece of technology will enable us to create a closed loop on the food waste in the kitchens, meaning no more dustbin lorries turning up to collect the food waste. Early indications show us this should be a success, so watch this space as we look to roll out this new initiative across more of our sites.

3) HCL is seeking partnerships that make us **Stronger Together** and continues to build relationships where everyone is valued.

At HCL we are proud supporters of fresh, locally produced goods and all our suppliers go through a demanding tender process to ensure we pick those suppliers that are not only fit for the job but take their sustainable responsibilities seriously. Over 70% of our basket of goods for our Primary menus comes from the UK.

Please find enclosed our UK Food map to see where some of our ingredients come from.

One example of our supply partners is our supplier of fresh fruit, vegetables, milk and eggs, Histon Produce. They supply fruit and vegetables from farms in East Anglia when seasonally available. Organic milk comes from farms in the Cotswolds, and our Free-Range Eggs from Wood Farm in Waresley near Sandy.



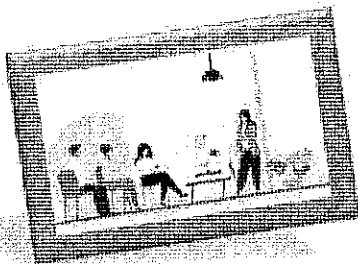
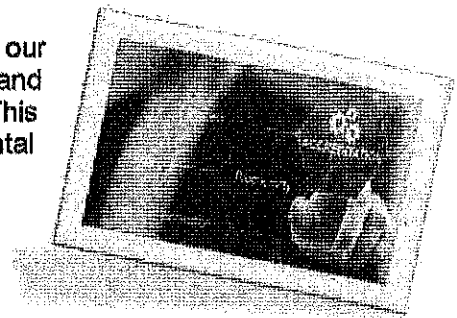
Histon Produce pride themselves on their ability to supply HCL with as much locally grown produce as possible, encouraging a strong working relationship with both their customers and suppliers. Throughout the course of the company's 24 years of trading, strong and sustainable working relationships have been built with many UK growers, most of which are local to the company's sorting and packing depot in Cambridgeshire. With a strong ethic towards limiting their own environmental impact, Histon have been at the very forefront of recycling their waste outputs and, indeed, that of their customers and suppliers too. For Histon's own delivery fleet, return journeys are nearly always utilised and seldom wasted by collecting unwanted flat-packed cardboard, or collecting fresh goods direct from the farm gate.

HCL encourages all its suppliers to limit the packaging they send their goods in and Histon Produce also minimise their packaging to their customers too with reusable crates conveying most of each delivery. Any of their food that is waste is sent to a local farmer to feed their cow herd, so stopping anything going to landfill.

4) HCL is committed to quality and takes pride in everything we do to ***deliver something special.***

As well as expecting high environmental standards from our supply chain, we strive hard to set our own high standards and that is why HCL is an accredited ISO 14001 business. This means that as a business we have an Environmental Management System in place.

HCL has put in place checks and processes that takes us through a continual cycle of improvement to lessen the impact our operations have on the environment.



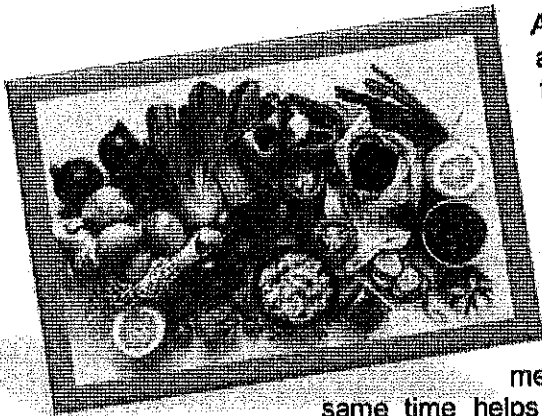
HCL's Sustainability Policy forms part of our Environmental Management System and applies to all HCL staff, partners and suppliers. For example, HCL encourages and trains catering staff to be environmentally responsible as part of their kitchen inductions.

We also deliver schemes for the benefit of schools to recycle their oil waste. Where Schools take up the scheme, HCL employs a specialist supplier that collects and recycles all their used cooking oil.

More recently, HCL has started its journey in becoming Net Zero Carbon by 2030, an important objective that has been in the planning for a few years now. We have partnered with a specialist consultancy to develop a carbon neutral programme for HCL that will enable us to achieve our net zero target that will benefit the wider community and the environment.



5) And finally, HCL is **Passionate About Food**; creating tasty, nutritious food that inspires.



As well as creating tasty menus with meat and fish we also create vegetarian and vegan meals, trialled and tested by of our dedicated team of nutritionists and chefs.

Our vegetarian and vegan meals have become more popular as the rise in flexitarian diets are becoming more common place. So much so, HCL has been pro-active to the changing tastes and demands for healthier plant-based choices, in our schools. We've responded by providing plant-based menu options that are delicious and nutritious but at the same time helps to reduce the impact on natural resources and greenhouse gas emissions. It's a win, win situation!

Everything helps and if we can encourage more healthier plant-based food options within our schools it will benefit the children we serve and the environment. However, we do not stop there and are not content to only serve up tasty plant-based menus we've taken to the road with our Nutritionist and Community Support Team visiting schools and encouraging pupils' uptake of healthy options by arranging fruit and vegetable-based events with a focus on fun as well as nutrition.

As you can see from some of our highlights above, HCL is constantly working, in-house, with suppliers and schools to move to greener ways of working. As a business we are looking to a cleaner future with embarking on our carbon zero journey and we are always finding ways to reduce waste and recycle more through new schemes and supply partners and the sustainable targets we set ourselves.

To Maggie, Natalia, Logan, William, Sam, Miley, Imogen, Samuel K, Jaden, Aiden, Liana, Molly and Carolina, we hope we have answered your questions and we thank you for taking an interest in HCL's sustainable initiatives.

Yours Sincerely

Ian Hamilton

Ian Hamilton  
CEO of HCL

# OUR UK FOOD TRACKING MAP

