

Beat the Summer Rush: Why Schools Should Book Their Kitchen Extract Cleaning Now

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The Annual July Scramble That Leaves Schools Non-Compliant

As the Easter holidays approach, facilities managers across educational establishments are finalising maintenance schedules for the coming months. Yet many overlook one critical task that should be on every FM's radar this spring: booking kitchen extract cleaning for the summer break.

"Every July, we receive a flood of desperate calls from schools looking to schedule kitchen extract cleaning during the summer holidays," explains Gavin Richards, Managing Director at [Indepth Services](#), a [PTSG](#) company.

"Unfortunately, by then, our summer calendar is typically fully booked, leaving many schools scrambling to find alternatives or facing the prospect of starting the new academic year with non-compliant kitchen systems."

The Summer Holiday Crunch

The six-week summer break represents the perfect opportunity for essential maintenance work in school kitchens. With students and most staff off-site, it's the ideal time to conduct thorough cleaning of kitchen extraction systems without disrupting daily operations.

However, this concentrated window creates intense demand for specialist cleaning services across the education sector. The most reputable service providers – those with proper TR19® certification – often find

their schedules completely full by early summer.

Gavin continues: “Schools operate in a unique environment with very specific maintenance windows. The competition for qualified contractors during the summer holidays is fierce, not just from other schools but from universities, colleges, and other seasonal businesses all vying for the same limited slots.”

Why Kitchen Extract Cleaning Can't Be Postponed

Postponing kitchen extract cleaning isn't merely an administrative inconvenience - it carries significant risks:

1. **Compliance Violations:** Kitchen extract systems must be professionally cleaned in accordance with TR19® standards, with frequency determined by usage patterns. For most school kitchens serving daily meals, this means at least annual cleaning.
2. **Insurance Implications:** Many schools don't realise that their insurance policies specifically require adherence to TR19® standards. Non-compliance could invalidate coverage in the event of a fire.
3. **Fire Safety Risks:** Statistics show that approximately 70% of fires in food establishments are attributed to cooking appliances, grease accumulation, and ventilation systems. School kitchens, which typically prepare hundreds of meals daily, can quickly accumulate hazardous levels of grease.
4. **Health and Safety Obligations:** Schools have a duty of care to provide a safe environment for students and staff. Properly maintained kitchen extraction systems are a fundamental part of this obligation.

The Cost of Delay

When schools miss the opportunity to schedule cleaning during the summer break, they face limited options - none of them ideal:

- **Term-time cleaning:** Requires kitchen closure, disrupting meal service and potentially requiring costly alternative arrangements.
- **Christmas break cleaning:** A shorter window with even higher demand and potential holiday surcharges.
- **Postponement:** Risking compliance violations and increasing fire hazards.

The financial implications of postponing proper maintenance extend far beyond the cost of cleaning itself. Business interruption, alternative catering arrangements, and the potential for invalidated insurance all represent significant financial risks.

Taking Action This Easter

For facilities managers looking to secure their summer maintenance slot, the advice from Indepth is:

1. **Act now:** Use the Easter period to finalise summer maintenance schedules
2. **Book early:** Contact reputable TR19®-certified cleaning specialists immediately
3. **Schedule a preliminary assessment:** Many providers can conduct a pre-booking inspection to assess the

specific needs of your facility

4. Review documentation: Ensure current certification is in order and understand when renewal is required
5. Consider cleaning frequency: Heavy-use kitchens may require more frequent cleaning than the minimum annual service

Finding the Right Provider

When selecting a kitchen extract cleaning provider, schools should look beyond price to ensure they're getting comprehensive service:

- TR19® certification: Essential for compliance and insurance purposes
- Education sector experience: Understanding of school environments and scheduling constraints
- Comprehensive documentation: Detailed before/after reporting and certification
- Minimal disruption methodology: Techniques that limit the impact on kitchen operations
- Proper disposal practices: Environmentally responsible removal of extracted grease and contaminants

Planning Ahead Pays Off

Forward-thinking facilities managers are increasingly adopting a cyclical approach to maintenance planning. "The most successful FMs we work with are already thinking about next summer's maintenance as this year's work concludes," explains Gavin. "This proactive approach ensures they secure preferred dates and contractors."

By booking kitchen extract cleaning during the Easter period, schools not only secure their preferred summer maintenance slots but also gain peace of mind knowing this critical compliance and safety requirement is addressed in their maintenance schedule.

With over 40 years of experience, Indepth Services specialises in comprehensive fire safety solutions, including kitchen extract cleaning, fire compartmentation, fire stopping, and fire and smoke damper inspection and testing. As part of Premier Technical Services Group Ltd (PTSG), they provide trusted expertise to companies nationwide.

To help schools and FMs understand their obligations and best practices, Indepth Services offers a FREE Kitchen Grease Extraction Guide. This comprehensive resource provides an essential summary of the TR19® document, offering an at-a-glance breakdown of key requirements and benefits. Download your free guide today by contacting Indepth Services on 020 8661 7888 or visiting their website.