

Many schools have discovered the benefits to be gained from installing a Twinfix canopy as an outside eating area, rather than extending their dining hall using traditional building methods.

Not only will a canopy cost them considerably less than a conventional building but these large span structures can be provided in significantly less time than a bricks and mortar build, and with very little disruption to school life. Combine these benefits with the fact that the aluminium-framed canopies will not rust and will never need repainting and you can really understand why they are chosen.

Twinfix always do a dry-run assembly in their factory prior to sending their aluminium frames off for powder coating. This last quality-check ensures that they fit together easily and quickly once they arrive on site. The big blue structure, measuring 7.3m x 16.3m, took only two weeks to install once the foundations had been fitted and the low level wall built, so the dry-run exercise was well worth it.

The choice of design will depend on several factors, such as the number of students it needs to hold, its position in relation to other buildings, whether it is south facing, etc. The Twinfix designers will work closely with the school team to create the best structure for their needs and for their budget.

The blue-framed canopy features a low brick wall and is then glazed up to roof level with multiwall polycarbonate panels, whilst others installed have been fitted with solid polycarbonate vertical glazing. In the case of the red-framed structure this has pebbled-effect polycarbonate from ground to roof, while the black-framed canopy has the pebbled-effect polycarbonate near to the ground and clear polycarbonate from waist height up to the roof. These options are all offered to help disguise knocks from school bags! If the structure is to be installed in a sunny area opal or bronze tinted multiwall polycarbonate can be used to glaze the roof to help provide some shading.

Another benefit of having an accessible external structure on the school premises is that after meals are over it can be used as a social area where students can sit and chat – and maybe even catch up on their homework! With tight budgets affecting everyone nowadays, it's good to see that having to cut your cloth a bit can result in great benefits - providing a cost-effective and multi-functional building for students' use.

