

# Food Policy in Schools

A Strategic Policy Framework  
for Governing Bodies

**Governors'**  
National Council



FOOD  
STANDARDS  
AGENCY

## Food Policy in Schools

### A Strategic Policy Framework for Governing Bodies

#### Key Themes

Healthier Breakfast Clubs



Healthier Tuck Shops



Water Provision



Healthier Vending



Healthier Lunchboxes



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## **Introduction**

### **Why should Governors get involved in school food?**

What children eat at school **is** important. Although there are regulations governing nutritional standards for school lunches, there is no current requirement for schools to have nutrition policies. A survey of governors carried out in 2003 by the National Governors' Council (NGC) and the Food Standards Agency (FSA) found that the overwhelming majority agree that schools should have policies in place to provide healthier food and to promote healthy eating. Far fewer reported that they actually play a role as a governing body in developing or monitoring such policies. They reported that they lacked the necessary information and they were unclear about their role in this in relation to the role of the head teacher.

But school governors, in discussion with head teachers, staff, pupils, caterers and parents can really make a difference. School governing bodies can also bring together parents and schools, to initiate co-ordinated change, and overcome the tendency for parents to identify schools as a barrier to changing children's diets, and for schools to place all responsibility with the home.

As a school governor you may already influence policies and practice in your school that play a large role in the children's nutrition, and in turn affect their performance at school, and their health now and in the future. But do you really understand the issues involved; the changing legal requirements and what 'best practice' could mean? This publication aims to help you to make positive and informed decisions about how best to introduce or further encourage your school to adopt a whole school approach to food and nutrition.

## **What is a whole school approach?**

Successful approaches are those in which messages about food and nutrition taught in the curriculum are echoed and reinforced by the type of food and drink provided in school through catering, tuck shops or vending. They are planned and systematic, involve teachers, caterers, parents and pupils and encompass the overall ethos and environment of the school. This is the basis of the Department for Education and Skills/Department of Health Healthy Schools Programme and Healthy Living Blueprint for Schools, in England, described on page 53. However, there are also areas of relevance for governors in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The FSA has always recognised the importance of taking a whole school approach to diet and nutrition and has adopted this approach through much of its activity for schools. In its Strategic Plan for 2005-2010, the Agency has set a strategic target to encourage all schools to adopt this approach.

## **The most effective way**

OfSTED<sup>1</sup> reports that whole school food policy is likely to be more effective if the governing body plans an overall strategic approach embedded in development planning, rather than taking ad hoc approaches to particular issues. In other words, this means governing bodies are in a key position to take an overview, involve the whole school, set priorities and monitor developments. While it is true that in some schools a single “champion”, be it a teacher, governor, school nurse or parent has provided the impetus and made great strides to implement aspects of a food policy, such an approach is always vulnerable as it may not be sustained if the “champion” moves on. This is why it is important for the governing body to take strategic ownership and embed school food policy in the aims and objectives for the school and in its development plan.

Also, “champions” may well focus on a single element of food policy, such as the curriculum or tuck shops, and these will undoubtedly have some positive impact. But a whole school approach, involving a planned curriculum and all aspects of food provision, should be part of a strategic plan driven by the governing body.

## **Healthy schools**

Healthy schools, in which food plays a major part, are highlighted in the government’s Choosing Health White Paper (page 53). The National Healthy School Programme (NHSP) (page 53) supported by the Healthy Living Blueprint (page 54) encourages the adoption of a whole school approach. Many schools have already developed work as part of these initiatives which contain specific food and nutrition elements requiring attention to both the curriculum and food provision in line with a whole school approach. The government has issued a key resource that can help schools deliver a whole school approach<sup>2</sup>.

The Government’s Five Year Strategy for Education and Skills includes strong encouragement for schools to work towards healthy school status through the NHSP. It is the Government’s aim that all schools should be healthy schools or working towards healthy school status by 2009.

## **Every Child Matters**

The Children's Green Paper Every Child Matters set out the Government's commitment to improving outcomes for all children and young people - including the most disadvantaged. One of the five outcomes is "being healthy". Under the new Ofsted Inspection Regime, which will come into force on 1 September 2005, schools will be inspected against the five outcomes. In the school's self evaluation form (SEF) it will need to demonstrate what steps it is taking towards the five outcomes. The introduction of a whole school food policy would be a key element towards this outcome.

### **THE FIVE OUTCOMES FROM EVERY CHILD MATTERS**

- Being healthy: enjoying good physical and mental health and living a healthy lifestyle
- Staying safe: being protected from harm and neglect
- Enjoying and achieving: getting the most out of life and developing the skills for adulthood
- Making a positive contribution: being involved with the community and society and not engaging in anti-social or offending behaviour
- Economic well-being: not being prevented by economic disadvantage from achieving their full potential in life.

In addition, under the new inspection regime the school's SEF will have to demonstrate how the school engages with pupils and parents. Such engagement with pupils and parents would be a key element in developing a whole school food policy.

## **What this guide provides**

The key focus of the document guides governing bodies through the steps necessary to adopt a strategic approach to food policy in schools, provides case studies illustrating what has been achieved in real life situations and lists useful resources.

Annexes (page 61 and 70) provide background about concerns surrounding children's eating habits, what we know about food and nutrition in school and describe the main features of a healthy balanced diet for every child over 5.

The guide need not be read as a whole, but can be used flexibly to address specific areas as needed.



## **Governors' Strategic Policy Framework**

A whole school food policy will help to ensure that the entire school community and the wider public understand the ethos of the school in relation to food and drink, both within the curriculum and in food and drink provision. It aids planning, and by engaging the whole school community of pupils, teachers, parents and caterers as well as governors it helps drive healthier eating throughout the school and promote health and well-being.

The following pages provide a step-by-step guide to help governing bodies adopt a strategic approach to food policy in schools.

## Step 1 - Governing Body Self Review

### Food Policy Checklist

Before starting to develop a whole school food policy you first need to assess existing provision and practice and review your own work in this area as a governing body. Please use this checklist to review your current practice and to identify issues for policy development in your school.

Has your governing body discussed food policy?

☐

Has your governing body agreed a whole school approach to food issues?

☐

Has your governing body appointed a named governor or a sub committee to address food policy issues?

☐

Does your school have mechanisms such as a School Council or a School Nutrition Action Group to involve pupils in food policy discussions?

☐

Does your school have policies for the following issues? If so, has the governing body discussed them?

- breakfast clubs
- break time snacks brought from outside school
- tuckshops
- school lunches (including the dining environment and lunch service)
- lunchboxes brought from home
- vending


- water

☐

- food and drink for after school clubs

☐

Does your school have a delegated budget for school meals?

☐

If so, is your governing body aware of its responsibilities for ensuring the nutritional standards for school lunches (see page 32) are met?

☐

Is the governing body aware of what is taught regarding healthy eating within the curriculum? Is what is taught “joined up” and consistent across subjects?

☐

Does the food provided in school reflect the healthy eating messages given in the curriculum?

☐

Is your school working towards healthy school status through the National Healthy School Programme?

☐

If so, what role is the governing body playing in this?

☐

Does your school provide extra-curricular activities, such as cookery clubs or growing clubs, to encourage healthy eating?

☐

Governors will also find the sample guide to a food in schools audit included in the Food in Schools Toolkit<sup>3</sup> helpful.

## **Governing Body Committee Structure Review**

The work towards a comprehensive whole school food policy could not all be carried out within full governing body meetings. It is more effective and manageable to delegate aspects of the work to sub-committees, including existing sub-committees such as finance and curriculum. Where governor numbers permit, a food policy sub-committee could be set up. In establishing a new sub-committee, co-opting other relevant members of the school community who may not be governors could be really beneficial to embedding a whole school approach. These could usefully include the catering manager, school bursar, representatives of the School Council, representatives of the PTA and/or a parent and others with a specific contribution to make.

Overall strategic decisions about food policy will clearly be made by the full governing body. All governors will need to have a shared understanding of the way forward.

## **Step 2 General Policies Review**

Several existing school policies will already refer to various aspects of food policy. It may be helpful to review these existing policies to ensure that new policy developments complement and build on these.

A review of the curriculum policy is recommended to ensure that food and nutrition education is available to pupils of all ages, is consistent across different subjects and is in line with your developing whole school food policy.

If your school is working towards healthy school status through the National Healthy School Programme you should review the food and nutrition elements of the programme to ensure consistency with your developing policy. From April 2005 healthy eating has been a required component of the NHSP.

There will be other existing school policies that might not explicitly relate to food policy but may still be relevant. For example, does your anti-bullying policy support the school in addressing any bullying related to weight or to food choices?

For this reason a general review of school policies may be helpful to ensure that all policies complement the whole school approach you are developing as well as addressing the five outcomes of Every Child Matters.

### **Step 3 Collecting Baseline Information**

#### **Pupils', Parents' and Staff Survey**

Ask a sub-committee to carry out a survey of pupils, parents and staff to ascertain what is currently available and what they would like to be available. In carrying out the survey you will need to make clear why you want the information and how important it is to take account of the views of pupils, parents and staff in developing policy.

Your survey should seek the following information:

- Where pupils and staff currently obtain their lunch school lunch/school vending/off the premises/brought from home.
- What pupils and staff currently eat for lunch (both on and off the premises).
- What healthier choices pupils, parents and staff would like to see provided in school lunches/vending machines/tuck shops.
- What pupils, parents and staff think about the quality of the food provided at the school.

There are many ways of obtaining the information, including:

- A formal questionnaire
- Suggestion box
- Noticeboard
- Discussion within the School Council
- Focus Groups with parents, pupils and staff.

### **Catering Provision Survey**

Ask a sub-committee to collect the following data related to school lunches, vending machines and the tuckshop.

- What income is generated?
- What range and volume of items are sold?
- What is the take-up of school lunches?
- Who manages the vending machines?
- Who manages the tuck shop?

The catering manager and school bursar may be key personnel and may be co-opted to this sub-committee. The sub-committee should be asked to report their findings to the full governing body.

## **Step 4 Policy Development**

A whole school food policy will need to address aspects of food provision across the whole school day as well as education about food and nutrition. The governing body needs to consider developing a policy for each of the 10 aspects listed below. Pulling all these policies together will generate your overarching school food policy.

- School Councils or School Nutrition Action Groups
- Breakfast clubs
- Break time snacks brought from outside school
- Tuck shops
- School lunches
- Packed lunches
- Vending
- Water
- Curriculum
- After School Clubs

For each of these areas, pages 18-52 provide background information, suggested aims, issues to consider, and sources of information, guidance and resources.

## **Step 5 Establish a Time Scale for Action**

Having considered all the aspects of food policy you need to determine your priorities for implementation. Depending on what is already in place in the school and on existing contracts, you may decide that remaining aspects can all be implemented in one programme or you may need to design a rolling programme for implementation over a period of years.

You will need to link your timeframe for implementation to the school development plan.

## **Step 6 Consultation with all Stakeholders**

Having carried out a survey of pupils, parents and staff, collected baseline information and developed your proposals, you now need to consult all stakeholders to ensure that you have support for your plans.

As part of the consultation you need to make the case to stakeholders for implementing a whole school food policy. In your consultation document you will need to:

- i) Set out the overall aim of your policy:  
A short mission statement may be appropriate for this. This would describe what you want to achieve and provide a short explanation of your aims. It also provides a reference point to refer back to as you implement your policy.

### **EXEMPLAR MISSION STATEMENT**

“Our overall mission is to ensure that healthier food and drink is provided at all times of day, taking account of individual needs (e.g. cultural, ethical, medical), reflecting nutrition and healthy eating messages in the curriculum, and with the support of the whole school.

The governing body recognises its responsibility for setting a strategic framework for the school’s food policy and for monitoring its implementation”.



- ii) Explain why you want to implement the policy:  
Provide background information on the need to improve children's diets.
- iii) Explain that Government policy requires schools to work towards the five outcomes of "Every Child Matters", one of which is "being healthy".
- iv) Describe the school's own survey results which give the views of pupils, parents and staff about food and nutrition and any changes they would like implemented.
- v) Explain how you intend to implement the policy:  
The detailed proposals for each aspect of your whole school food policy including proposed timescales.

## **Step 7 Implementation**

Having determined your strategy, and consulted as necessary, once agreement is reached and the policy written, ensure that the whole school food policy is embedded in school development plans. The governing body now needs to hand over the implementation and day to day management to the Headteacher and senior management team.

## **Step 8 Monitor and Review**

Once implementation is in process the role of the governing body becomes one of monitoring and review.

The relevant sub-committees will require regular feedback from the senior management team. Such feedback may include:

- Implementation of best practice by caterers
- Take-up of school lunches
- Vending/tuckshop sales
- Pupil and parent satisfaction surveys
- Career development of catering staff
- Issues specific to your school

Monitoring and review will lead to ongoing policy development with changes over time.

## **Step 9 Celebrate your success**

Having gone through all the preceding steps your school should now be well on its way to gaining healthy school status through the National Healthy School Programme. So celebrate your success with the whole school family! And make sure that, whatever your celebration, it includes lots of healthier, tasty food and drinks!

## **Policy Development for Individual Areas**

### **School Councils**

#### **Background**

School Councils aim to involve pupils democratically in the life of their school. The School Council helps schools to listen to the views of pupils. They provide a structure to facilitate this communication and to enable pupils to take responsibility for many aspects of school life in which they were previously not involved or consulted. Pupils are elected to represent their classes. They input the views of their classmates to discussions and decision making at the School Council. Pupils can, therefore, make suggestions to change aspects of school life. Food issues are a common agenda item at School Council meetings. Governors are often asked to attend School Council meetings to listen to views and to provide information about school policies. School council representatives sometimes attend governing body meetings as observers for non confidential items. Alternatively you could suggest that a School Nutrition Action Group (SNAG) be set up specifically to discuss food issues in school. A SNAG can include pupils, teachers, parents, caterers, a governor, and a health professional such as a dietician associated with the school.

#### **Aims**

- To provide a mechanism for consulting pupils at all stages of developing the school food policy.
- To allow pupils to take responsibility for aspects of the school food policy.

### Issues to consider

- Has the school already set up a School Council or SNAG?
- Is there effective communication between the School Council or SNAG and the governing body so that pupils can make real contributions to policy making?
- Consider delegating specific aspects of policy development to the School Council or SNAG, e.g. pupil surveys, menu design, rules for breaktime snacks.

Moseley School, Birmingham, is a secondary school with students aged from 11 to 18 years in which **'student voice'** is very important. So, when the governing body was considering its options for a new catering contract, naturally the School Council was consulted. Over previous years the school had been addressing the health agenda and had banned turkey 'drummers' and 'twizzlers', removed vending machines, stopped selling chocolate and fizzy drinks and reduced levels of salt and sugar in recipes. However, despite an increase in the consumption of 'meals of the day', chips and pizza remained the staples of many students.

It was School Council members who suggested that students would welcome the provision of more vegetables although canteen and teaching staff feared that the Council's proposed chip ban would drive students out of school to the nearest chip shop. Agreement was reached that one chip-free day per week would be an appropriate start. The School Council also highlighted a need for better education about healthy eating and members approved a consultation process involving questionnaires for Years 7 and 9.

Mayfield C.E. Middle School for 9-13 year olds on the Isle of Wight has established a Parents' Group and **Pupils' Food Committee**, in which Governors are represented, to continue building on the groundwork done to involve the whole school community in health issues. The Chair of Governors takes a keen interest in diet and health issues in the school.

**Information/Guidance/Resources**

School Councils UK (supported by DfES)

[www.schoolcouncils.org](http://www.schoolcouncils.org)

LEA advisers for citizenship and PSHE can support schools in setting up School Councils.

School Nutrition Action Groups. See

[www.healthedtrust.com/pages/snag.htm](http://www.healthedtrust.com/pages/snag.htm)

## Breakfast Clubs



### Background

As well as providing a forum for healthier breakfasts, such clubs can address the needs of children who arrive at school very early and who don't otherwise have a breakfast. They can be used to promote better attendance by pupils and also are a forum for involving parents in their child's education including nutrition education. Breakfast clubs provide a range of activities such as reading, sports and exercise.

Children who don't have breakfast may have low blood sugar and dehydration, which can affect their ability to concentrate. It is known that significant numbers of children do not eat breakfast before leaving home<sup>4</sup>. Breakfast club provision falls within the Extended Schools agenda and the Government's target that schools should aim to offer wrap around care between 8am and 6pm.

### Aims

- To provide a healthier breakfast for children who otherwise would go without.
- To provide practical nutrition education.
- To model healthier breakfasts to parents.
- To ensure that the provision is in line with the whole school food policy.

**Issues to consider**

- Discussions with School Council or SNAG.
- Whether to involve parents in the club as volunteers.
- Whether to provide opportunities for parents to eat breakfast with their children and to use the opportunity to promote parenting skills in general with a focus on nutritional skills.
- Charging policy/free provision.
- Registering your breakfast club as a charity.
- As with all out of school provision, whether in-house or contracted out, you need to consider wider policies regarding funding, staffing, insurance, health and safety and food hygiene.
- Whether or not to target particular groups of disadvantaged pupils.

St Ivo School in Cambridgeshire has been running **Books Over Breakfast** for the past 4 years with the overall aim of encouraging pupils to engage in reading and enhance their levels of achievement. The main target group for the club is year 7 less able readers. The breakfast club is managed by a teacher and a teaching assistant (both of whom are paid for their time). They have also recruited 10 volunteers from year 12, whose work at the breakfast club contributes towards their compulsory community service. This integration of year groups helps to combat bullying through increased cross year and peer group communication.

The club is widely promoted across the school and local community. It is featured in the school prospectus, on the clubs and activities programme, on posters which are placed on notice boards and in classrooms, on the intranet and on the school website.

The club operates an ongoing monitoring and evaluation system by inviting parents into the club at least once a term, making the effort to gather informal feedback from the members and the parents and asking everyone to complete a more formal questionnaire once a year. The Books Over Breakfast club has regular parties and celebratory events at Christmas and the end of each term, which offers a great opportunity to informally find out what people think about the club, what they have enjoyed doing and what they think could be improved.

Foods on offer include: Toast, low fat spreads/margarine, jams, marmalade, chocolate spread, a variety of cereals, fresh fruit, yoghurt, milk, fruit juice, tea and coffee.

The club, which is free for members, is currently funded through Study Support, LEA/Standards Fund. The three main benefits to pupils attending the club have been identified as: provision of breakfast for children who arrive early at school and may not otherwise have eaten before class time, improved social skills for less confident members and improved attainment and interest in reading.



**Information/Guidance/Resources**

Continyou Breakfast Club Project –  
[www.breakfastclubsplus.org.uk](http://www.breakfastclubsplus.org.uk)

Food in schools toolkit. Healthier breakfast clubs. 2005.  
Department of Health/Department for Education and Skills/5 a  
day/Healthy Schools/NHS. DH Publications, London.  
[www.Foodinschools.org](http://www.Foodinschools.org)

DfES Extended Schools Guidance available on Teachernet–  
This covers issues governors need to be aware of in setting up  
provision outside of the normal school day.  
[www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/extendedschools/detailedguidance/](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/extendedschools/detailedguidance/)

## **Breaktime Snacks**

These could include snacks brought from home or bought from shops on the journey to school.

### **Background**

Many pupils consume large quantities of snacks (e.g. crisps, confectionery and sugary drinks) every day. Working with parents to influence snacks brought from home will generally be more relevant to primary schools than secondary schools. Secondary school pupils are more likely to buy their own snacks on the way to school.

Many of the issues to do with packed lunchboxes (page 39) will be similar to this issue of breaktime snacks.

### **Aims**

- To ensure that breaktime snacks are in line with the whole school food policy.
- To gain parents' agreement to the school's policy regarding snacks.

### **Issues to consider**

- Involving pupils in drawing up the rules through the School Council or SNAG.
- Thorough consultation with parents to gain their agreement.
- Restricting snacks to fruit and vegetables and other healthier snacks either at all times or several days each week.
- Disposal of litter.
- Safety issues regarding bottles, cans and ring-pulls.
- Restricting snacks to those bought from the healthier school tuck shop.
- For young children, providing communal snacks in the classroom immediately before breaktime.
- For young children, replacing snacks with the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme.

Haslingden Primary School, Lancashire, introduced a healthy snack policy in school. They decided that only fruit would be allowed at morning play times. The school considered how best it could encourage the provision of fruit snacks and decided that one way would be to set up a fruit tuck shop so that pupils could purchase fruit snacks at school.

The School Council carried out a survey of all pupils to discover which fruit they preferred and also ran a competition to name the tuck shop.

The Tootey Frootey Tuck Shop opens before school to allow pupils to purchase their fruit snacks for breaktime. The policy was successfully introduced to the school and pupils could soon be seen eating fruit during playtimes. The tuck shop helped kick start the policy, but now many pupils bring fruit direct from home. As well as encouraging healthy eating a side benefit of the policy has been a tidier playground with noticeably less litter.

**Judging what is healthier;  
A LOT and a LITTLE**

**FAT**

A LOT is 20g or more per 100g  
A LITTLE is 3g or less per 100g

**SATURATED FAT**

A LOT is 5g or more per 100g  
A LITTLE is 1g or less per 100g

**SUGAR**

A LOT is 10g or more of added sugar per 100g  
A LITTLE is 2g or less of added sugar per 100g

**SALT (SODIUM)**

A LOT is 0.5g or more per 100g  
A LITTLE is 0.1g or less per 100g

**Suggested Healthier  
Snack Items**

Crispbreads/ rice cakes/ bread sticks. Filled rolls, sandwiches and baguettes, Pizza slice, thick base.

Fruit (dried or fresh)

Vegetables – (e.g. carrot, celery or cucumber batons, cherry tomatoes)

Currant buns, scones or tea breads  
Low sugar cereal bar  
Low fat yogurt or fromage frais

Water  
Fruit Juice  
Semi-skimmed milk  
Fruit smoothie

**Information/Guidance/Resources**

Department of Health, School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme  
[www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAndSocialCareTopics/FiveADay/FiveADayGeneralInformation/FiveADayGeneralArticle/fs/en?CONTENT\\_ID=4002149&chk=DeYbs5](http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAndSocialCareTopics/FiveADay/FiveADayGeneralInformation/FiveADayGeneralArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4002149&chk=DeYbs5)

Health Education Trust  
Healthy Snack Policy - Newsletter article  
[www.healthedtrust.com/jan/pg2.htm](http://www.healthedtrust.com/jan/pg2.htm)

## **Tuck Shops**



### **Background**

Pupils need food and drink during the school day to maintain energy and concentration levels. Tuck shops offer an alternative to bringing food and drink from home or to buying it from local shops. Primary schools are unlikely to provide vending machines and many consider tuck shops as an alternative. Tuck shops can offer pupils opportunities for taking responsibility and for practical involvement in enterprise education programmes.

### **Aims**

- To ensure that tuck shop provision is in line with whole school food policy.
- To provide a source of healthier snack food and drink.
- To gain pupils' and parents' agreement to tuck shop policy.
- To make use of tuck shops as a way of educating pupils about healthier snack foods.

### **Issues to consider**

- Involving pupils through School Councils or SNAGs in agreeing rules for tuck shops.
- Whether to provide only a fruit and vegetable tuck shop, or a tuck shop selling a range of healthier items.
- Litter disposal.
- Your charging policy and whether or not to make a profit.
- Supply in terms of availability of healthier items as well as price, delivery etc.
- Storage issues and shelf-life of products.
- Opening times.
- Staffing arrangements and whether to involve pupils and/or parent volunteers.

Mayfield C.E.Middle school for 9-13 year olds, situated on the Isle of Wight, with an above national average proportion of children eligible for free school meals, has recently established a **Milk Bar** providing a range of healthier drinks and snack foods for break times. The Milk Bar came about through discussions with the school catering company. Break time snacks have been restricted to toast, healthier biscuits, fruit, water, juice and milk, thereby cutting out crisps, chocolate bars and flavoured drinks. Money comes from the children, meal card allowances and a Government allocation for subsidy for children up to 11 years. It is already proving to be a huge success.

### **Information/Guidance/Resources**

Food in schools toolkit. Healthier tuck shops. Department of Health/ Department for Education and Skills/Healthy Schools/ NHS. See also [www.Foodinschools.org](http://www.Foodinschools.org)

A Practical Guide to Running a Fruit Tuckshop. Food Standards Agency. Link: [www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/fruittuckwales](http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/fruittuckwales)

Guidance on Healthier products to stock your tuckshop with. British Nutrition Foundation. Link: [www.nutrition.org.uk/](http://www.nutrition.org.uk/)

## **School Lunches**

### **Background**

For many pupils, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, the school lunch may be the only substantial meal they eat during the whole day. It is therefore important that the school lunch provides a tasty and nutritious meal for all pupils. Surveys<sup>5 6</sup> have shown that the situation with school lunches, in relation to the nutritional content of the provision, pupil choices and staff training is less than satisfactory.

### **What responsibilities do Governors already have in relation to food provided in schools?**

#### **Delegated budgets: school catering services**

Responsibility for the provision of school meals depends on whether the budget for school meals has been delegated to schools. Since April 2000 funding for school meals has been delegated to all secondary schools. Some LEAs also delegate meals funding to primary and special schools. Where this is not the case primary and special schools may opt to have a delegated budget.

Where meals funding has been delegated then the governing body is responsible for the provision of the school meals service.

### **What schools must provide**

Governing bodies are required to provide the following meals services within schools:

- **Free School Meals** – to those pupils who are entitled to a free school meal (FSM). This does not have to be a cooked meal. Pupils qualify for a FSM if their parents receive one of the following benefits;
  - Income Support
  - Job Seekers Allowance – Income Based
  - Support under part V1 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
  - Child Tax Credit, but do not receive any Working Tax Credit, and their annual income (as assessed by the Inland Revenue) does not exceed £13,480.
- **Paid School Meals** – to any other pupil within the school whose parents have requested that a meal is provided. This does not have to be a cooked meal. All pupils must be charged the same amount for the same quantity of food.
- **Facilities to Eat Packed Lunches** – to enable pupils who have brought food from home to eat it. Pupils cannot be charged for the use of facilities.

### **Compliance with Statutory Nutritional Standards**

Where the Local Education Authority (LEA) has delegated the budget for the provision of school meals then the governing body is responsible for ensuring that The Education (Nutritional Standards for School Lunches) (England) Regulations 2000 are complied with.



The standards for secondary schools are currently under revision, and the revised standards are due to go into force in 2006.

There are separate nutritional standards for nursery, primary and secondary schools. Standards should be met right through the meal service. For the purposes of the Regulations, foods are split into five groups and the Regulations stipulate how many times a week various foods should be available. The only exception to this is those foods in group E which do not have to be made available at all.

The five groups are:

- A, Fruit and vegetables (these can be fresh, canned, dried, frozen or as juice).
- B. Starchy foods (e.g. bread, rice, pasta, noodles, chapattis, potatoes)
- C. Meat, fish and other non-dairy sources of protein (meat and fish include meat and fish products; alternatives include eggs, nuts, and pulses)
- D. Milk and dairy foods (including milk, cheese, yoghurt, custard).
- E. Foods containing fat and foods containing sugar (e.g. fat spreads, salad dressings, cream, savoury snacks, biscuits, cakes, pastries, puddings, confectionery, fizzy drinks).

**Nursery Pupils** - At least one item of food from each of groups A-D must be available as part of school lunches every day.

**Primary Schools** - Nutritional Standards are more prescribed – Lunches must include the following:

<u>Each Day</u>	<u>At Least Once A Week</u>	<u>At Least Twice A Week</u>
Food from each of Groups A-D  Fresh Fruit Fruit canned in juice or fruit salad  Vegetable from Group A	Fish	Red Meat  Fruit based dessert

Foods in Group B should not be cooked in fat or oil  
more than three times a week

**Secondary Schools** – Lunches must include the following:

<u>Each Day</u>	<u>At Least Twice A Week</u>	<u>At Least Three Times A Week</u>
Two types of food from each of the Groups A-D  Fruit and vegetable from Group A	Fish	Red Meat

On every day that food from Group B cooked in oil or fat is  
available, one not cooked in fat must also be available

The Regulations also apply to special schools.

These are minimum standards, but if you operate a delegated budget, you are free to require contractors to exceed these standards when you draw up contracts and specifications for the meals to be served in your school. The Department for Education and Skills' best practice guidance<sup>7</sup> encourages caterers to work beyond the minimum standards towards the Caroline Walker Trust nutrient guidelines. The Department for Education and Skills is developing support for heads and governors to help them draw up contracts with school meal providers.

### **Aims**

- Maintain and or increase levels of uptake of school lunches
- Ensure that the food provided is of a high quality and promotes health
- Ensure that the choices provided address cultural, religious and dietary needs
- Ensure the school has the capacity to provide a meal for all those who require one

### **Issues to consider**

- Consultation with School Council or SNAG.
- Whether the school caterer is following best practice guidance.
- Whether the school catering manager or head cook has been on healthy catering or healthy eating training in the last 12 months.
- Dining room environment including seating arrangements, décor, queues, over-crowding, choice of furniture. The physical environment and whether it's conducive to social interaction between pupils will have an impact upon uptake of school lunches.
- Consultation with parents and pupils about future provision/choices of healthier food items.
- Whether to retain the existing provider, to consider alternative providers or to provide in-house service.

- If retaining existing provider, review and consider renegotiation of existing contract
  - Negotiate directly as an individual governing body, or
  - Negotiate through your local governor association to enhance bargaining power through weight of numbers.
- If considering in-house provision:
  - Do you have facilities already in place?
  - The implications for equipment.
  - Health, safety and food hygiene responsibilities.
  - Staffing arrangements and whether to enhance the status and conditions of current staff.
- Choices at the Food Counter
  - Is a wide range of choice necessary?
  - Is the existing choice only between unhealthy options?
  - Should choice only relate to cultural, religious and dietary needs?

Following the end of their contract with Essex County Council Beckers Green Primary School decided to set up **their own in-house school lunch service**. One of the key aims of the governors was to provide healthier, better quality food. The school also decided that each day it would offer the choice of just two main meals, one meat one vegetarian, served with potatoes and vegetables or salad. Children have a choice of milk, fruit juice or water to drink. Since implementing these changes lunch take up has risen steadily. This illustrates that children do not need extensive choices and that they will eat a balanced meal including vegetables.

- Cashless economy
  - Consider whether you wish to adopt a smart/swipe card system or other alternative cashless system

As part of a total revision of their school lunch service St Aidan's High School in Harrogate introduced a **cashless system using swipe cards**. Pupils use the card to purchase all food in school. The system also enables the school to monitor individual pupils' purchases of food and drink. The school issues reports to parents where it is felt that a pupil is consistently making "inappropriate" food choices.

- Whether pupils should be allowed to leave the premises at lunchtime
  - Consider whether this has an impact on attendance, behaviour and community relations as well as on lunchtime food choices
  - Consider trialling or introducing a total or partial ban on leaving the premises.

Harry Carlton Secondary School in East Leake Nottinghamshire has introduced **restrictions on pupils leaving the premises** at lunch times. This has been greatly welcomed by the local community and is now an accepted part of the school's rules.

- How to monitor the catering contract (a governor responsibility)
  - Whether contractor is meeting the statutory standards.
  - Whether pupil choices are meeting their nutritional requirements.

### **Information/Guidance/Resources**

The nutritional standards and other legislation relating to school lunches. Link:

[www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/atoz/m/mealsandmilk/index.cfm?code=legi](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/atoz/m/mealsandmilk/index.cfm?code=legi)

Healthy School Lunches for Pupils at Nursery/Primary/Secondary Schools. Guidance for caterers on implementing national nutritional standards. Link:

[www.dfes.gov.uk/schoollunches/default.shtml](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/schoollunches/default.shtml)

School meals in secondary schools in England. Nelson M et al. (2004). Food Standards Agency/Department for Education and Skills. DfES Research Report 557. DfES Publications, Nottingham. Link:

[www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/secondaryschoolmeals.pdf](http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/secondaryschoolmeals.pdf)

Food in schools toolkit. Dining Room Environment. (2005). Department of Health/ Department for Education and Skills /5 a Day/Healthy Schools/NHS. DH Publications, London. Link: [www.Foodinschools.org](http://www.Foodinschools.org)

Local Catering Services LEA catering manager – can be contacted via your LEA governor support service if necessary. Local Authority Catering Association. Link: [www.laca.co.uk/](http://www.laca.co.uk/)

Providing Meals in Essex Primary Schools – Guidance for in-house provision. Link:

[www.eafl.org.uk/Downloads/EssexSchoolDirectory.pdf](http://www.eafl.org.uk/Downloads/EssexSchoolDirectory.pdf)

Nutritional Guidelines for School Meals. Caroline Walker Trust. Link: [www.cwt.org.uk/publications.html](http://www.cwt.org.uk/publications.html)

School Food Trust (see page 55). Further details available shortly from DfES) LEA websites – check your own LEA website as many have informative sections on school lunches.

FeedmeBetter. (2005). Jamie Oliver. Link: [www.feedmebetter.com/](http://www.feedmebetter.com/)

## **Packed Lunchboxes Bought From Home**



### **Background**

A large proportion of children do not eat a school lunch and many bring their lunch from home. Therefore, a school food policy needs to address how to promote healthier packed lunchboxes.

It is a common misconception that packed lunches brought from home provide a healthier choice than a school meal. However, the results of the Food Standards Agency School Lunchbox Surveys 2003 and 2004 challenged this assumption. The findings indicated that many lunchboxes contained food with high levels of fat, sugar and salt.

Following consultation with parents it is possible for schools to set guidelines regarding the content of lunchboxes.

### **Aims**

- To ensure lunchbox contents are in line with the whole school food policy.
- To gain parents' agreement to a lunchbox policy.

### **Issues to consider**

- Consultation with School Council or SNAG.
- Provision of information for parents such as lunchbox menu plans.
- Of all issues regarding food policy this is arguably the one that requires the most thorough and sensitive consultation with parents.
- Use of dining room facilities and seating arrangements for eating packed lunches.
- Safety issues regarding glass bottles and tins in lunchboxes – consider banning these.
- Disposal of litter.



If the school considers providing healthier packed lunch ideas for parents and children who make lunch boxes, the following are some menus from the Food Standard Agency web site:

### Some examples for healthier packed lunches

#### Example 1

- Bagel with salad, canned salmon and medium fat cream cheese
- Carrot batons
- Apple
- Diluted lime squash
- 2 Jaffa cakes

#### Nutrition Information

Energy 447kcal  
 Protein 19.8g  
 Fat 11.3g  
 Saturates 5.0g  
 Carbohydrate 70.1g  
 Sugars 43.1g  
 Sodium 595mg  
 Salt 1.5g  
 Average cost of 3 supermarkets:  
 £0.87

#### Example 2

- Wholemeal medium pitta bread with reduced-fat cottage cheese and salad
- Cucumber batons
- Low fat crisps (multipack size)
- Chocolate flavoured milk
- Raisins

#### Nutrition Information

Energy 635kcal  
 Protein 25.8g  
 Fat 11.2g  
 Saturates 3.3g  
 Carbohydrate 114.8g  
 Sugars 55.9g  
 Sodium 840mg  
 Salt 2.1g  
 Average cost of 3 supermarkets:  
 £0.93

#### Example 3

- Sliced beef roll with cucumber and lettuce (low-fat spread)
- Fruit yoghurt, reduced-fat
- Pear
- Flavoured sparkling water

#### Nutrition Information

Energy 494kcal  
 Protein 26.6g  
 Fat 7.6g  
 Saturates 2.7g  
 Carbohydrate 93.9g  
 Sugars 35.2g  
 Sodium 999mg  
 Salt 2.5g  
 Average cost of 3 supermarkets:  
 £0.90

At Stoke Prior First school, Worcestershire, Governors led the way in introducing healthy eating to their school and have now obtained Children's Fund backing for a **Great Grub Project** in the county. They had enthusiastic support from the head teacher and staff, keeping parents informed through newsletters and information leaflets, and involving them and their children through food sampling and competitions.

No meals were provided, so the first target was to promote the idea of healthier food in lunchboxes: reducing the amount of fat, salt and sugar and encouraging wholemeal bread, fruit and water.

They launched a four week programme of events in school. An anonymous survey of the contents of lunchboxes was conducted and the children used their numeracy and IT lessons to analyse the results. A gourmet food tasting evening was held, sponsored by the local supermarket, and the supermarket provided prizes for two competitions: children were asked to design a lunchbox and parents had to come up with an unusual sandwich filling. Other events included a picnic day on the school field, homework on shopping lists and class visits to the supermarket.

A follow-up survey of lunchboxes showed a significant increase in wholemeal bread, fruit, salad and water and a decrease in crisps and chocolate bars. The initiative was extended and has been sustained over a three year period with follow-up events like healthier sandwich workshops and "Fruit Fridays".

**Information/Guidance/Resources**

Food in schools toolkit. Healthier Lunchboxes. (2005).  
Department of Health/ Department for Education and Skills /5 a  
Day/Healthy Schools/NHS. DH Publications, London. Link:  
[www.Foodinschools.org](http://www.Foodinschools.org)

Two month's worth of lunch box suggestions from the Food  
Standards Agency: Link:  
[www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2003/sep/lunchbox](http://www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2003/sep/lunchbox) and  
[www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2004/sep/lunchbox2](http://www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2004/sep/lunchbox2)

Lunchbox tips and menu plans – NGC booklet (50p) Link:  
[www.ngc.org.uk](http://www.ngc.org.uk)

## Vending



### Background

Generally this is a secondary school issue with limited relevance to primary schools. Large numbers of secondary schools are supplying soft drinks, confectionery and crisps in vending machines in spite of increasing concerns about children's health. Vending machines can provide a substantial income to the school unless they are provided by a PFI contractor in which case there may be no income to the school at all. Vending machines are administratively convenient requiring little work by the school itself.

### Aims

- To provide healthier refreshments both during and outside school catering hours.
- To ensure that vending is in line with the whole school food policy.
- To limit branding and advertising associated with vending machines.
- To generate income for the school.

The governors of Downham Market High School in Norfolk took the decision to **remove fizzy drinks vending machines** from the school's main site where 1250+ students are educated, and behaviour noticeably improved.

The governors subsequently agreed to take part in the government's 'Food in Schools' Healthier Food Vending Project and installed a carousel vending machine.

A fundamental part of this project and the school's philosophy was the engagement of the students in the planning of the project and selection of products.

The machine was stocked with a range of products that included freshly made sandwiches, baguettes, pasta and fruit salad pots, dried fruit, yogurt, water and pure juices. The students had access to the machine before and after school as well as at breaks and lunchtimes.

The machine proved so popular that a second was acquired. The machines have proved to be a sound commercial proposition and the only problem has been keeping them restocked to meet the high demand.

### **Issues to consider**

- Consultation with School Council or SNAG (this is a key element in success)
- Existing contractual arrangements:
  - If the school already has a vending machine contract is it possible to renegotiate or terminate the contract.
  - If your school is part of a PFI project make sure at the planning stage that you will retain control and income.
- The amount of income currently generated.
- The type of vending machine provision you prefer:
  - No vending machines at all.
  - Machines only offering healthier options
  - A mixture with some healthier options.
  - Machines with or without branding.
- Litter disposal.

- Who has responsibility for filling the machines on a daily basis - make sure the vending machines are placed conveniently for them to maintain full stocks.
- The siting of the machines around the school and whether the location leads to competition with school catering.
- Consultation with pupils about preferred healthier items to be stocked.

Harry Carlton School in Nottinghamshire was rebuilt under a PFI contract. The new buildings were opened in September 2003. The school's canteen housed several vending machines all of which contained confectionery and sugary drinks. All profits from the vending machines went directly to the contractor.

The school discovered that under the terms of the contract it had no direct control over the contents of the vending machines and was locked into a contract for three years. The Head teacher managed to negotiate changes to the content of one of the machines so that it offers healthier options. He is currently negotiating to have all the vending machines removed from the school in advance of the official end of the contract.

### **Information/Guidance/Resources**

A feasibility study into healthier drinks vending in schools.

Harvey J. (2004). Food Standards Agency, London. Link: [www.food.org.uk/multimedia/pdfs/vendingreport.pdf](http://www.food.org.uk/multimedia/pdfs/vendingreport.pdf)

Vending Healthy Drinks: a guide for schools. (2004).

FSA/Health Education Trust/The Dairy Council Link: [www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/vendingmachinebooklet.pdf](http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/vendingmachinebooklet.pdf)

Food in schools toolkit. Healthier vending. (2005). Department of Health/ Department for Education and Skills /5 a day/Healthy Schools/NHS. DH Publications, London. Link: [www.Foodinschools.org](http://www.Foodinschools.org)

## Water



### Background

Many schools particularly in the secondary sector do not have easily accessible drinking water. It is not suitable for drinking water to be sited in toilet areas. The health benefits of drinking water are widely acknowledged. It is important that as part of a whole school food policy the governing body considers how to promote water consumption. One of the supporting criteria for the national standards for under-fives day care introduced in 2001 emphasises that fresh drinking water should be available at all times of the day. Best practice guidance for caterers on implementing the statutory nutritional standards for school lunches includes an expectation by the Secretary of State that drinking water should be available to all pupils every day free of charge.

### Aims

- To encourage pupils to drink water at frequent intervals throughout the day.
- To ensure that all pupils have easy access to fresh drinking water throughout the school day.

### Issues to consider

- Consultation with School Council or SNAG.
- Whether to allow pupils to drink water at their desks (but not in computer suites etc).
- Whether to provide plastic sports bottles with non-spill caps.
- Provision of water fountains/coolers – how many needed and where to site etc (see resources section).
- Ensure adequate water is available during hot weather and after physical activity.
- Whether bottled water should be sold from vending machines.
- Adequate provision of jugs of water and plastic beakers on dining tables.
- Whether to ban sugary drinks brought from home for breaktime snacks or in lunchboxes.

A week of events in school launched **Stoke Prior First School's Water Policy**. The children had visits from Severn Trent Water Authority, a football coach to talk about drinking water in sport, and other talks on the difficulty of obtaining clean drinking water in other countries. The Blue Peter Wells appeal and a poster competition for National Drink Water Day also helped to raise awareness. Free water bottles were issued to all children as part of school uniform and star charts were used to encourage children to bring their filled bottles every day.

Throughout the food (see page 41) and water campaigns, local press and radio covered the school's events. In October 2003 the Governors who initiated the activity were invited to speak to MPs and health experts at the Westminster Diet and Health Forum.

### **Information/Guidance/Resources**

Food in schools toolkit. Water provision. (2005). Department of Health/ Department for Education and Skills /5 a Day/Healthy Schools/NHS. DH Publications, London. Link: [www.Foodinschools.org](http://www.Foodinschools.org)

Yorkshire Water "Cool Schools" Campaign. Link: [www.yorkshirewater.com/yorkshirewater/schools.html](http://www.yorkshirewater.com/yorkshirewater/schools.html)

Water is Cool in Schools Link: [www.wateriscoolinschool.org.uk/index.html](http://www.wateriscoolinschool.org.uk/index.html)

Teachernet (Drinking Water). Link: [www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/healthyliving/foodanddrink/drinkingwater/](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/healthyliving/foodanddrink/drinkingwater/)



## **After School Clubs**

### **Background**

After school club provision falls within the Extended Schools agenda and the Government's target that schools should aim to offer "wrap around care" between 8am and 6pm. Where pupils are staying at school until 6pm, schools will need to provide food and drink and this gives opportunities to promote healthy eating and to provide nutrition education and related activities.

### **Aims**

- Ensure that food and drink provision at after school clubs is in line with the whole school food policy whether it is provided in-house or by sub-contractors.
- To provide healthier food and drink, where necessary, for pupils attending after school activities.
- To provide activities that promote the healthy eating agenda such as cookery clubs and growing clubs.

### **Issues to consider**

- Consultation with School Council or SNAG.
- Wider policies regarding funding, staffing, insurance, health and safety and food hygiene, as with all after school provision, whether in-house or contracted out.
- Whether or not to target particular groups of disadvantaged pupils.

Norham Community College, George Stevenson High School, Burnside High School, Monkseaton High School and Southlands schools in North Tyneside worked with the Children's University and a local community dietitian to set up **after-school-hours cooking clubs called Cook It!**

With the help of school mentors, they also ran a special two-day cooking event, which included practical cooking sessions; a supermarket challenge for children to compare prices and try to buy a lunch for £2; 'Ready Steady Cook vs Hell's Kitchen' with local chefs to produce a buffet for approximately 120 people; an outside visit to a large local kitchen catering for footballers; presentations, prizes and of course eating! Towards the end parents, who were all very impressed with the results, attended the event.

### **Information/Guidance/Resources**

DfES Extended Schools Guidance available on Teachernet– This covers issues governors need to be aware of in setting up provision outside of the normal school day. Link: [www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/extendedschools/detailedguidance/](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/extendedschools/detailedguidance/)

Cook It! A guide to setting up and running a cookery club. (2005). Food Standards Agency/ContinYou. Available from ContinYou. Link: [www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk) (tbc)

Food in schools toolkit. Healthier cookery clubs. Growing Clubs. (2005). Department of Health/ Department for Education and Skills /5 a Day/Healthy Schools/NHS. DH Publications, London. Link: [www.Foodinschools.org](http://www.Foodinschools.org)

## **Curriculum**

### **Background**

The governing body has a strategic role. The head teacher is responsible for preparing the curriculum policy. The role of the governing body is to consider, agree, monitor and review the policy and its implementation.

As part of this responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the curriculum policy, the governing body will need to ensure that nutrition education is embedded in the curriculum, that there is consistency across different subjects (science, technology, PSHE, PE etc.), and that it is consistent with the whole school food policy.

It is not the governing body's role to be involved in day to day management issues such as detailed curriculum planning or the selection of teaching resources. A whole school food policy should, however, address effective nutrition education within the curriculum. Ofsted has reported that unless schools adopt a strategic approach to food and nutrition education which develops a broad understanding of healthy eating in a systematic way, it has little effect on children's eating habits.

### **Aims**

- To ensure that the whole school food policy encompasses nutrition education in the curriculum.
- To ensure that the school has in place a broad and systematic food and nutrition curriculum for all age groups.

### **Issues to consider**

- Whether food and nutrition education is provided for every age group through a planned developmental approach.
- Whether there is consistency across subjects and with food provision and with other aspects of the whole school food policy.
- Whether teachers are confident in having the knowledge, skills and resources to deliver the food and nutrition curriculum.

### **Information/Guidance/Resources**

The Education (School Government) (Terms of Reference) (England) Regulations 2000 – set out the respective roles of governing bodies and headteachers. These can be found on GovernorNet along with other helpful information. Link: <http://www.governor.net.co.uk/publishArticle.cfm?contentid=62&topicAreaId=9&pageStart=1&sortOrder=title&searchWhere=all&searchString=school%20government%20terms%20of%20reference>

GovernorNet - DFES Governors' Guide to the Law (Chapter 6 – the Curriculum). Link: [www.governor.net.co.uk/publishArticle.cfm?topicAreaId=29&contentId=894](http://www.governor.net.co.uk/publishArticle.cfm?topicAreaId=29&contentId=894)

Getting to Grips with Grub. (2003). Food-related core competencies for 14-16 year olds. Food Standards Agency. Link: [www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/grubgrips.pdf](http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/grubgrips.pdf)

Starting early: food and nutrition education of young children. (2004). Ofsted/Food Standards Agency/DfES. Report of joint Ofsted/FSA survey of food-related good practice in early year settings, and primary schools, Link: [www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/ofstedearly.pdf](http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/ofstedearly.pdf)

Establishing a Food Partnership between Primary and Secondary Schools. (2003). Department for Education and Skills/ Design and Technology Association/ British Nutrition Foundation/ Focus on Food. Shows how local primary and secondary schools can link together to improve food and nutrition education by a liaison between secondary school food specialist teachers and primary school colleagues to share good practice, ideas and resources.

The booklet provides detailed guidance and case studies for schools to start their own partnerships around the country. Link: [www.nutrition.org.uk/home.asp?siteId=43&sectionId=357&subsectionId=310&parentSection=300&which=2#961](http://www.nutrition.org.uk/home.asp?siteId=43&sectionId=357&subsectionId=310&parentSection=300&which=2#961)

## **National Initiatives, Guidance and Resources**

### **Healthy Schools – General**

#### **Healthy Living Blueprint for Schools**

This is a Department for Education and Skills (DfES) initiative which is intended to give schools access to a comprehensive range of resources that they can use to provide children with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to lead healthy lives. Schools are encouraged to adopt a whole school approach.

Link: [www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/healthyliving/](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/healthyliving/)

**Choosing Health Public Health White Paper:** food and physical activity action plans. In 2004 the Government published a White Paper to promote public health. This was followed in 2005 by two action plans both of which are very relevant to schools. Links:

**Choosing a Better Diet**

**Choosing Activity**

**[www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications](http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications)**

#### **National Healthy Schools Programme**

The Department for Education and Skills, and the Department of Health (DH) jointly fund this initiative. The overall aim is to help schools become healthier environments that are conducive to learning and encourage pupils to achieve.

Schools can access support and services from their local healthy schools programme, to help them work towards healthy school status under the National Healthy Schools Programme. The local healthy schools programme is managed by a partnership between the Local Education Authority (LEA) and the local Primary Care Trust (PCT). Link at the Wired for Health website:

**Wired for Health - National Healthy Schools Programme**  
**[www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk](http://www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk)**

**Wired For Health**

This site provides information relating to the National Curriculum, plus interactive sites for school children of all ages.

Link:

[www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk](http://www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk)

**Food and Drink for Children – All Aspects****School Food Trust**

The School Food Trust, which will become operational from Autumn 2005, is intended to play a key role in advising and supporting parents where school food is poor and schools lack the capacity to change. It will bring together industry, education and the voluntary and community sectors to support schools and families in improving school food. As well as providing expert support to schools and LEAs, working closely with the 'healthy schools' programme, it will encourage schools to trial new approaches to improving school food.

**Food Standards Agency**

The Agency's websites [www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk) and [www.eatwell.gov.uk](http://www.eatwell.gov.uk) provide a wealth of information covering all aspects of food and drink (including those listed in Steps towards Governors' Strategic Policy Framework (pages 8-52) both within schools, and also at different life-stages. For example you can find out about initiatives within schools to encourage fruit and vegetable consumption (Five a day the Bash Street Way) or to run after-schools cooking clubs (Cook It!), guidance on setting up a fruit tuck shop, reports of school-based surveys and research, lunchbox menus, printed resources, and a CD ROM (Dish it Up!) for children to use in and out of school.

The Agency has also produced a guide for catering course lecturers and trainers Catering for Health, which contains practical information about healthier catering practice suitable for school caterers. Available from The Stationery Office, price £5.

The Agency, the Department for Education and Skills and People 1<sup>st</sup> (the Sector Skills Council for Hospitality and Leisure) have also developed a Vocational Qualification and associated course materials in healthier catering for school caterers. For more details email People 1<sup>st</sup> on [schoolcatering@people1st.co.uk](mailto:schoolcatering@people1st.co.uk)

The Agency is also developing target nutrient specifications for processed foods used in school meals which will guide suppliers of school food towards lower fat, sugar and salt contents and aid school caterers to implement the nutritional standards.

There will be a public consultation on the nature of these specifications in June 2005. See [www.food.gov.uk/](http://www.food.gov.uk/)

Other Agency activity that Governors may find of interest include:

**Food Standards Agency Cooking Bus.** A bus, which converts into a superb kitchen that can be used to train teachers and pupils in cooking skills is touring the country visiting schools especially those in disadvantaged areas. To book the bus see: [www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2003/nov/bookbus](http://www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2003/nov/bookbus)

### **Dish it Up!**

An interactive CD-ROM for 11-12 year olds to motivate them to adopt a healthier lifestyle especially healthier eating. Contains fun quizzes, games and a dietary self-assessment tool. Available free from Food Standards agency Publications Tel: 0845 606 0667; E mail: [foodstandards@eclogistics.co.uk](mailto:foodstandards@eclogistics.co.uk)



**Five a Day the Bash Street Way.**

Food Standards Agency resource materials for primary school teachers and 7-11 year old pupils featuring the Bash Street Kids cartoon characters to encourage greater consumption of fruit and vegetables. Link:

[www.food.gov.uk/interactivetools/educational/bashstreetdiet/](http://www.food.gov.uk/interactivetools/educational/bashstreetdiet/)

**Eat Smart Play Smart.**

Food Standards Agency resource developed for primary school teachers throughout the UK to use with children aged 5 to 7 years to engage them in making healthier food choices and in keeping active. Link:

[www.food.gov.uk/healthiereating/eatsmartplaysmart/](http://www.food.gov.uk/healthiereating/eatsmartplaysmart/)

**Food in Schools**

This joint Department for Education and Skills/Department of Health initiative has two strands. The DfES strand comprises eight curriculum topics covering teacher training and professional development, as well as guidelines, resources and curriculum materials. The DH strand has eight projects that promote healthier eating and drinking throughout the school day:

Healthier Breakfast Clubs  
Healthier Tuck Shops  
Water Provision  
Healthier Vending  
Healthier Lunch Boxes  
Dining Room Environment  
Healthier Cookery Clubs  
Growing Clubs

The Food in Schools toolkit outlines new ideas for healthy eating and drinking initiatives and includes guidance for developing a whole school food policy. It is fully integrated into the Healthy Schools Programme and supports the Healthy Living Blueprint. Link:  
Food in Schools Programme  
([www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAndSocialCareTopics/FoodInSchools](http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAndSocialCareTopics/FoodInSchools))

### **British Nutrition Foundation**

Link: British Nutrition Foundation ([www.nutrition.org.uk](http://www.nutrition.org.uk)) .Click on “Develop Your Whole School Food Policy” under “Schools and Education” on the home page. This document can be printed off the website. Click on “Education” on the home page side bar for lots of resources. Click on “Links”, then “School Education Links” for nearly 40 other sites including Food Forum Food Forum ([www.foodforum.org.uk](http://www.foodforum.org.uk)) and Food Fitness Food Fitness([www.foodfitness.org.uk](http://www.foodfitness.org.uk)) .

### **Fruit and Vegetables in Schools**

#### **5 A Day**

Links: The main 5 a Day web site can be found at 5 A DAY [www.5aday.nhs.uk](http://www.5aday.nhs.uk)

As well as including details of community initiatives, and fruit and vegetable resources, this web site also contains links to the **National School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme**. This scheme was first introduced on a pilot basis in 2002 and has been extended across England. All four to six year old children in LEA-maintained infant, primary and special schools are entitled to a free piece of fruit or vegetable each school day.

**Five a Day the Bash Street Way.** Food Standards Agency resource materials for primary school teachers and 7-11 year old pupils featuring the Bash Street Kids cartoon characters to encourage greater consumption of fruit and vegetables. See: [www.food.gov.uk/interactivetools/educational/bashstreetdiet/](http://www.food.gov.uk/interactivetools/educational/bashstreetdiet/)

### **Grab 5!**

Link: [Sustain](http://www.sustainweb.org) ([www.sustainweb.org](http://www.sustainweb.org)) . Click on “Grab 5” on the home page for ideas and materials to encourage children to eat more fruit and veg.

### **Packed Lunches**

#### **National Governors’ Council (NGC): Lunchbox Tips and Menu Plans**

This is an attractive 8 page booklet which can be ordered by post from the National Governors’ Council, Lonsdale House, 52 Blucher Street, Birmingham, B1 1QU, or by Email from [ngc@ngc.org.uk](mailto:ngc@ngc.org.uk). The cost is 50p/booklet (Cheques payable to the National Governors’ Council), to cover printing and postage costs.

The resource uses information provided by the Food Standards Agency, and is designed to help families pack a healthy balanced lunch for children, and a whole month of lunch box ideas have been carefully put together to make sure they balance over a week for energy, total fat, saturated fat, carbohydrate, protein, salt and sugar. They aim to give a range of tastes, textures and colours to appeal to children aged 9-12 years. In addition, lunch box tips are suggested. Advice for cutting down on fat, sugar and salt is also included.

If you are considering, as a governing body, guidelines for lunch boxes brought from home, then you might find it useful to provide this booklet for parents. Practice has shown that early consultation with parents is essential when introducing such guidance. Consultation will be more effective if accompanied by good quality supporting information. Link: [www.ngc.org.uk](http://www.ngc.org.uk).

**Food Standards Agency.**

Report of school lunchbox surveys carried out in 2003 and 2004. Two month's worth of lunchbox menus and top tips for lunchboxes. Links:

[www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2003/sep/lunchbox](http://www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2003/sep/lunchbox) and  
[www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2004/sep/lunchbox2](http://www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2004/sep/lunchbox2)

**Food in schools toolkit. Healthier lunchboxes. (2005).**

Department of Health/5 a day/Healthy Schools/NHS. DH Publications, London. [www.foodinschools.org](http://www.foodinschools.org)

**Breakfasts in School****Breakfast Clubs**

ContinYou have information about setting up breakfast clubs.

Link: [Breakfast Clubs \(www.continyou.org.uk\)](http://www.continyou.org.uk)

**Food in schools toolkit. Healthier Breakfast Clubs. (2005).**

Department of Health/5 a day/Healthy Schools/NHS. DH Publications, London. Link: [www.foodinschools.org](http://www.foodinschools.org)

**The Magic Breakfast**

A charitable project which provides a breakfast service for primary schools. Link: [Magic Breakfast](http://www.magicbreakfast.co.uk)  
([www.magicbreakfast.co.uk](http://www.magicbreakfast.co.uk))

**Drinks in Schools**

**Food in schools toolkit. Water Provision. (2005).** Department of Health/5 a day/Healthy Schools/NHS. DH Publications, London. [www.foodinschools.org](http://www.foodinschools.org)

**Water is Cool in School**

Campaign to raise awareness of the importance of providing drinking water for children in schools

Link: [Water is cool in school](http://www.wateriscoolinschool.org.uk) ([www.wateriscoolinschool.org.uk](http://www.wateriscoolinschool.org.uk))

**Vending Healthy Drinks**

A guide on how to set up healthier vending machines and make a profit in secondary schools, selling drinks such as milk, pure fruit juice and water

This publication is the result of a project funded by the Food Standards Agency and supported by The Health Education Trust and The Dairy Council. It has been distributed to secondary schools in the UK in a bid to encourage head teachers and caterers to offer healthier drinks in vending machines. Link: [Vending healthy drinks](http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/vendingmachinebooklet.pdf) ([www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/vendingmachinebooklet.pdf](http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/vendingmachinebooklet.pdf))

## **Annex 1 Children's eating habits and the need for a healthy, balanced diet**

### **What's the problem with children's eating habits?**

In general children's eating patterns do not follow healthy eating recommendations and when combined with low levels of physical activity, it means that a high proportion of the next generation are likely to be overweight or obese if nothing is changed.

Poorly balanced diets can affect health profoundly, both in the short and long-term. Short-term effects in children include, for example: tooth decay as a result of frequent consumption of sugary foods and drinks; anaemia as a consequence of having relatively low amounts of iron in the diet; poor bone health because of low calcium and Vitamin D intakes. Overweight children can often suffer social and psychological problems. Poor diet may affect concentration in the classroom, and importantly for long term health can increase the risk of heart disease, strokes and some cancers later in life.

It makes sense to take preventative measures early on. Habits are formed early in life, and are major factors in determining the sort of food people choose to eat when they are older. Both homes and schools, together with wider changes like reviewing food promotions aimed at children and making healthier food accessible, can play a vital role in halting -and hopefully reversing- the progressive worsening of children's diets.

The following shows what major national surveys have found out about children's diets and nutritional status in recent years. There is no room for complacency about the problems these results have highlighted. These need to be tackled on a number of fronts. Schools are a key component and are well placed, together with parents, to make a significant contribution to changing children's diets for the better.

**Findings of National Surveys<sup>8 9</sup>: -**

- 1 in 5 boys and 1 in 4 girls were obese or overweight in 2002. The Royal College of Physicians<sup>10</sup> estimates that by 2020, if the present trends continue, 50% of children will be obese.
- The average proportion of energy from saturated fats eaten by children was just above 14%, compared with the recommendation of 11%.
- Refined sugars provided about 16% of energy, compared to a recommended average of no more than 11%. The main source of these was carbonated soft drinks, followed by chocolate.
- Average intake of salt was about twice the maximum target amount.
- In some of the older children, particularly girls, there were low intakes of some micronutrients, like calcium and iron. Micronutrient levels per unit of energy were lower in children from lower socio economic households, indicating a poorer quality diet.
- The children ate less than half of the recommended 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day, with 1 in 5 eating no fruit at all.

### **What do we know about food and nutrition in schools?**

There is no doubt that many children's diets are not well balanced. This section looks specifically at the food children often eat in school; what children and parents think about school food and diet; and pointers to making positive changes in schools.

#### **Breakfast clubs**

Before-school breakfast clubs have developed to meet health, education and childcare needs. Children's arriving at school having missed breakfast was often the main reason behind the formation of school-based clubs<sup>11</sup>. On average 8% of children have nothing to eat before school and this proportion doubles for 15-16 year olds<sup>12</sup>. However, a study of breakfast clubs<sup>13</sup> reported that breakfasts were not always nutritious and well balanced. Where healthier options had been offered, the take up was often low and strategies such as a slow approach to changes or offering beans on toast instead of fruit were needed. Clubs may be particularly beneficial for children from deprived backgrounds who would not otherwise eat in a morning.

#### **Lunches**

On the whole, lunches eaten in school – whether packed at home or provided by the school – can leave a lot to be desired.



### **Lunchbox Surveys<sup>14</sup>**

- An estimated 5.5 billion lunchboxes are packed for children each year in the UK, and 9 out of 10 surveyed children chose to take a packed lunch to school each day.
- From lunchbox foods alone, 9 -12 year old children are eating double the recommended lunchtime intake of saturated fat and sugar and up to half their maximum daily target salt intake.
- 3 out of 4 lunchboxes (74%) fail to meet Government nutritional standards that were set for school meals in 2001.
- Most fat present in the surveyed lunchbox foods came from crisps, fat spreads, cheese products, chocolate bars and biscuits.
- Foods contributing to high salt intake included white bread, crisps and processed meats, and the higher levels of added sugars came mainly from fruit squashes, chocolate-covered bars and biscuits and yoghurts.
- A fifth of lunchboxes did not contain a starchy food such as sandwiches, pasta or rice, and just under half the lunchboxes surveyed (48%) failed to contain a portion of fruit or vegetable. Only 1 lunchbox (out of 688) contained a salad.

### **Secondary School Meals Survey<sup>15</sup>**

- Many schools followed healthier cooking practices (e.g. frying in vegetable oil, using semi-skimmed milk), but only a minority followed other healthier practices (e.g. 15% restricted access to table salt, 17% used low fat spreads in sandwiches). 99% of schools fried their chips, rather than preparing oven chips.
- In catering contracts, the language was worthy and indicated a strong commitment to the notion of healthy eating -but failed to specify tight contractual structures to help healthier food provision and choice.
- In contracts, there was very little reference to controlling the salt content of school meals, access to salt by pupils, or the prevention of obesity.
- By the end of the meal service, only 47% of schools were still meeting the nutritional standards for school meals.

- Chips and other potatoes cooked in oil were served in 76% of schools on 4 or more days, high fat main dishes such as burgers and chicken nuggets in 86%. In 28% of schools, no fruit juice was served.
- Only 7% of schools provided set meals over the course of 1 week that met 8 or more of 12 voluntary nutrient based guidelines<sup>16</sup>. The guidelines for which meals were most likely to fail were for iron, calcium and percent energy from carbohydrate (starchy foods).
- 48% of pupils chose high fat main dishes (e.g. burgers), 48% chose chips and other potato products cooked in oil, 45% chose soft drinks and 24% chose cakes or muffins. The least popular choices were fruit (2%), fruit juice (3%), and vegetables and salads (6%).
- Only a quarter of head cooks/catering managers or their staff had received training in healthier eating or cooking in the past 12 months, but where staff had had training on healthier eating or cooking, pupils tended to choose lower fat main dishes more often
- The majority of head cooks and catering managers could not name three or more of the current nutritional standards for school meals.

## **Vending<sup>17</sup>**

- A feasibility study in which machines vending a range of healthier drinks products were placed in schools alongside regular vending machines found that children will buy drinks such as milk products, pure juices and waters. The schools involved described such vending as, 'an important part of the food service', and 'of benefit to the whole school'. Not only will pupils buy healthier drinks, but the machines can make a profit, as long as the school manages the vending effectively, for example by:
  - Considering the best place to put the machines
  - Making sure the machines are appropriate for the products which will be stocked in them
  - Ensuring staff are committed to the idea
  - Consulting pupils on an ongoing basis
  - Monitoring usage and product purchases

This study formed the basis for further piloting of healthier foods and drinks as part of the Food in Schools initiative<sup>18</sup> which also suggests changing the casing of machines so that little or no advertising of product brands is displayed; and using chilled and ambient vending to offer a broader range of healthier options such as sandwiches, yogurts and fresh fruit.

### **Children's and Parents' views**

Two recent surveys<sup>19 20</sup> provide insights into what both young people and their parents think. Children are aware of healthy eating. However, their behaviour, particularly within the school and in social situations does not reflect this. This is partly because of influences such as peer pressure, but children themselves also report barriers such as queuing for food and crowded dining rooms within schools.

Perhaps surprisingly (and encouragingly), more than two thirds of children say that they would like to learn to cook. Although whether this means from basic ingredients is not clear, with many children's cooking skills at the moment being confined to putting together meals or snacks from pre-prepared ingredients

At present children tend to identify schools as a source of theoretical information about food science, and consider them weak as far as the practicalities of cooking and eating are concerned.

Whereas children like hand-held items such as pizza and burgers, parents want their children to have healthier and more traditional meals such as roast meals, salads, jacket potatoes, sandwiches, pasta and fresh fruit. Three-quarters of parents surveyed say that it is important that their child's school provides healthier meals, with about 50% suggesting that working parents need schools to provide the main meal of the day for their child.

### **Positive Pointers to Healthier Eating**

A report from Ofsted/FSA/DfES <sup>21</sup>, based on practical experience in visiting pre-school and primary school settings identified the successful approaches that a minority of schools had adopted to provide a healthier food environment. These are: -

- an unambiguous, clear and coherent written policy that
  - steered the management of food and nutrition education
  - was based on an audit of current practice
  - said clearly what was to be achieved, why, how and when
  - identified how success would be measured
- those engaged in developing children's understanding about food and health have a factual knowledge that is
  - accurate
  - based on informed and current nutritional advice,
  - free from bias
- coherence and consistency in all the messages that are conveyed about food and nutrition, both within and outside the taught curriculum
- the children are active participants
- parents/carers are involved

Evidence<sup>22</sup> from phase one of the National Healthy Schools Programme showed that schools involved in the programme were improving faster in terms of health behaviours than other schools. They scored higher on 9 out of 11 Ofsted indicators. Children and young people report a range of positive outcomes such as feeling less likely to be bullied, feeling as though they have more of a say in the running of the school and enjoying it more.

Regular surveys<sup>23</sup> not only of school meals, but also of the broader school and home environment have consistently shown the importance of groups and committees, such as school Councils or School Nutrition Action Groups which include pupils as key members, in encouraging healthy eating in schools. However, despite the undisputed positive effects that these groups can have, they are still only found in a minority (about 23%) of schools in 2005.

## Annex 2 What is a healthy, balanced diet?



Children need a healthy, balanced diet, which is rich in fruit, vegetables and bread/other cereals/potatoes, contains moderate amounts of meat (or alternatives) and dairy products, and contains much less fat, sugar, and salt than many children currently eat.

Teenagers have nutrient and energy needs that are higher than those of any other age group. Because of this they have large appetites, which is normal. But it is important that they eat food of high nutritional value in the form of well-balanced meals rather than too many snacks that are rich in fat, sugar or salt. A poor diet combined with low levels of physical activity means that they can end up both overweight, and lacking in essential minerals and vitamins.

By tackling food in schools, as well as in other areas of children's diets, the aim is to tip the balance of the diet back in favour of fruit and vegetables, and bread/other cereals/potatoes, and away from foods containing a lot of fat, sugar, and salt.

## Tipping the balance towards.....

Issue	Recommendations	Tips
<p><b>Fruit and Vegetables:</b></p> <p>These can be fresh, canned, frozen, dried, or as juice.</p>	<p><b>At least 5 portions a day</b></p> <p>A variety of different types are best.</p> <p>Juices and baked beans each only count once a day towards the '5'.</p> <p>Potatoes and similar starchy foods do <b>not</b> count because they fulfil the role of staples rather than vegetables in the average diet.</p>	<p>Citrus fruit (such as oranges and lemons), tomatoes, and peppers, are all good sources of vitamin C, which is essential for health. Vitamin C may help the absorption of iron, so having fruit juice with an iron-rich meal will increase iron absorption.</p> <p>Oranges and green vegetables are good sources of folate, a B vitamin, which helps to prevent a certain type of anaemia. Girls of child bearing age should eat plenty of folate rich foods prior to conception and during the early months of pregnancy to reduce their risk of having a baby with a Neural Tube Defect.</p> <p>Pure fruit juice in cartons is convenient, but is high in sugar and should preferably be drunk only at mealtimes.</p> <p>Baked beans are high in protein and fibre but do not contain vitamin C.</p> <p>Fruit and vegetables make good snack foods, and are much better for children's weight, as well as being naturally low in fat and salt and high in a range of vitamins and minerals.</p> <p>It is a good idea to make it the norm to have fruit and vegetables as a part of all meals to provide colour and texture.</p>



Issue	Recommendations	Tips
<b><i>Bread, other cereals and potatoes</i></b>	<b><i>Meals should be based on starchy foods which should provide most of the energy that comes from carbohydrates.</i></b>	<p>Starchy foods, like bread/other cereals/potatoes, are not particular fattening, contrary to some popular beliefs. However, the calories they provide are greatly increased by the fat that is often added to them, in the form of sauces, spreads or cooking oil.</p> <p>Whole grain varieties have extra nutrients, such as B vitamins, and are rich in fibre.</p> <p>Fortified breakfast cereals, as well as margarine and oily fish, are good sources of dietary vitamin D, which helps ensure a good supply of calcium in the blood and therefore healthy bones.</p>
<b><i>Meat and meat alternatives</i></b>	<b><i>Only moderate amounts of meat are needed</i></b>	<p>Meat, particularly red meat and liver, and oily fish are rich sources of iron. Pulses (beans and lentils), green vegetables and fortified cereals are also good sources of iron. Iron is needed for healthy blood and research has shown that some children have low intakes of iron, particularly older girls. Soya products and nuts contain calcium which is needed for healthy bones and teeth.</p>
<b><i>Fish</i></b>	<b><i>At least two portions a week, one of which should be oily fish.</i></b>	<p>Fish is a good source of protein, vitamins and minerals and is low in saturated fat. Oily fish, such as mackerel, salmon and sardines, also contain oils beneficial to health. (The beneficial oils in tuna are removed during the canning process).</p> <p><i>Girls should avoid having more than two portions of oily fish a week to help prevent high levels of dioxins and PCBs building up in their bodies. These could interfere with the development of the baby if they get pregnant in the future. Children should avoid eating shark, swordfish and marlin because these contain relatively high levels of mercury which, until the age of 16, might affect a young person's developing nervous system.</i></p>
<b><i>Milk and dairy foods</i></b>	<b><i>Only moderate amounts of these are needed</i></b>	<p>Milk, cheese, yoghurt are rich in calcium which is needed for healthy bones and teeth.</p>

## Tipping the balance away from .....

Issue	Recommendations	Tips
<b>Fat</b>	<b><i>Less than 35% of the energy from food in the diet should come from this, and no more than 11% should be from saturated fats.</i></b>	<p>Many people could eat less fatty foods such as chips, burgers and fried food in general.</p> <p>With many recipes it is worth stopping to think whether it is really necessary to use all of the oil or fat in the ingredients list.</p> <p>Foods lower in fat include starchy foods like potatoes and rice, most fruit and vegetables, lean meats, poultry with the skin and fat removed, fish, cottage cheese, and low fat yogurts.</p> <p>Look for reduced fat versions of e.g. fat spreads and dairy products, or use smaller portions.</p> <p>Extra fat is easily trimmed or drained from unprocessed meat.</p>
<b>Salt (sodium)</b>	<p><b><i>The maximum amount of salt (sodium) children should be having varies by age:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b><i>• 4 to 6 years – 3 g (1.2 g) a day</i></b></li> <li><b><i>• 7 to 10 years – 5 g (2 g) a day</i></b></li> <li><b><i>• 11 years upwards – 6 g (2.4 g) a day</i></b></li> </ul>	<p>There's no need to add salt to children's food. It can be flavoured with herbs and mild spices.</p> <p>Three-quarters (75%) of the salt eaten comes from processed food, such as breakfast cereals, soups, sauces, ready meals and biscuits.</p> <p>Processed foods, even those aimed at children, can contain a lot of salt so it is important to check food labels or ask catering suppliers for nutritional information.</p> <p>Low salt snacks include plain popcorn, fruit, vegetable sticks.</p>

Issue	Recommendations	Tips
<b>Sugars</b>	<b><i>Less than 11% of the energy from food in the diet should come from added sugars</i></b>	<p>How often sugar is eaten is also very important, with frequent consumption of sugary foods and drinks causing tooth decay.</p> <p>Snack foods such as cakes, biscuits, crisps, chocolate and sweets, are not only often high in sugar and saturated fat, but also low in vitamins and minerals.</p> <p>The main sources of added sugars in children's diets are cakes, confectionery, and soft drinks. Soft drink consumption particularly has risen dramatically over recent years.</p> <p>Water, skimmed or semi-skimmed milk, are the best drinks for children to have in between meals.</p> <p>As with fat, the sugar in many recipes can easily be reduced.</p>

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Starting Early: food and nutrition education of young children (2004) Office for Standards in Education Department for Education and Skills, and the Food Standards Agency. Link: [www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/ofstedearly.pdf](http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/ofstedearly.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Food in schools toolkit. (2005). Department of Health/Department for Education and Skills/5 a Day/Healthy Schools/NHS. DH Publications, London. Link: [www.foodinschools.org](http://www.foodinschools.org)

<sup>3</sup> Food in schools toolkit. Establishing a whole school food policy, p.11-14. (2005). Department of Health/Department for Education and Skills/5 a Day/Healthy Schools/NHS. DH Publications, London. Link: [www.foodinschools.org](http://www.foodinschools.org)

<sup>4</sup> The Sodexho School Meals and Lifestyle Survey 2005. Sodexho, Surrey. Link: [www.sodexho.co.uk](http://www.sodexho.co.uk)

<sup>5</sup> School meals in secondary schools in England. Nelson et al. (2004). Food standards Agency and Department for education & Skills. DfES Research Report 557, DfES Publications, Nottingham. Link: [www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/secondaryschoolmeals.pdf](http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/secondaryschoolmeals.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Starting early: food and nutrition education of young children Office for Standards in Education Department for Education and Skills, and the Food Standards Agency (2004). OfSTED, London. Link: [www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/ofstedearly.pdf](http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/ofstedearly.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Healthy school lunches for pupils/students in nursery/primary/secondary schools. 2001. Department for Education & Skills. See: [www.dfes.gov.uk/schoollunches/](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/schoollunches/)

<sup>8</sup> National Diet and Nutrition survey: Young People aged 4-18 years. Gregory J et al. (2000). The Stationery Office, London.

<sup>9</sup> Health Survey for England. (2002). Department of Health, London.

<sup>10</sup> Storing up Problems. ( 2004). Royal College of Physicians, London.

<sup>11</sup> Food for thought: Breakfast clubs and their challenges. Street C and Kenway P. (1999). New Policy Institute, London. Link: [www.npi.org.uk/proj%20breakfast.htm](http://www.npi.org.uk/proj%20breakfast.htm)

<sup>12</sup> The Sodexho School Meals and Lifestyle Surveys. (2005). Sodexho, Surrey. Link: [www.sodexho.co.uk/](http://www.sodexho.co.uk/)

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- <sup>14</sup> School lunchbox surveys (2003 and 2004). Food Standards Agency, London. Link: [www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/schoollunchbox.pdf](http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/schoollunchbox.pdf)
- <sup>15</sup> School Meals in Secondary Schools in England. Nelson et al. (2004). Food Standards Agency/Department for Education and Skills. DfES Research Report 557, Nottingham. Link: [www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/secondaryschoolmeals.pdf](http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/secondaryschoolmeals.pdf)
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- <sup>22</sup> Evidence is drawn from a national evaluation undertaken by Thomas Coram Research Unit and the National Foundation for Educational Research, an analysis of Ofsted reports as well as local programme and school based evaluation.
- <sup>23</sup> The Sodexho School Meals and Lifestyle Surveys. (2005). Sodexho, Surrey.

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