

## School Food in England-Policy Overview

### Policy Overview

Schools in England have been providing food to children in schools since 1906, though the programs and policies involved in food provision have changed greatly throughout the years.<sup>1</sup> Appendix 1 provides a brief overview of the policy developments relevant to school food over the last century. The most recent school food standards (School Food Regulations 2014) came into effect in January 2015. The government provides several resource documents that offer voluntary practical guidance on how to apply the School Food Standards and make sure healthy food options are available to students. The resources (see Appendix 6) include the following: School Food Standards Practical Guide; Checklist for Headteachers; School Food: Guidance for Governors; Preparing Tasty and varied menus; Portion Sizes and Food Guides; Allergy Guidance for Schools; Preparing for Food Supply Chain Changes; Checklist for School Lunches; Checklist for School Food other than Lunch; and Creating a culture and ethos of healthy eating.<sup>2,3</sup> The School Food Standards (see Appendix 2) apply throughout the entire school day, covering all food and beverages, in addition to lunch, that are provided to students both on and off school premises up to 6pm; this includes breakfast clubs, snacks, tuck shops, and after-school clubs. School governors are responsible for compliance with the School Food Standards.<sup>4</sup> There are some exceptions to the School Food Regulations, which do not apply to food provided:

- At parties or celebrations to mark religious or cultural occasions.
- at fund-raising events,
- as rewards for achievement, good behaviour, etc.,
- in teaching food preparation and cookery skills, including where the food prepared is served to pupils as part of a school lunch,
- by parents or students on an occasional basis,
- as confectionery, snacks, cakes, or biscuits, served as part of an evening meal at maintained boarding schools before 6pm.<sup>5</sup>

Currently, there are two free school meal schemes in England. One program is related to family income and eligible students may apply for free school meals throughout their education (discussed in more detail under the section titled ‘Funding’). The second program, the Universal

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<sup>1</sup> Holland, Fiona. “The History of Free School Meals in the UK and the Changes Ahead.” Food Matters Live, January 4, 2022.

<https://foodmatterslive.com/article/the-history-of-free-school-meals-in-the-uk-and-the-changes-needed/>.

<sup>2</sup> GOV.UK. “School Food Standards: Resources for Schools.” GOV.UK, May 2022.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-food-standards-resources-for-schools>.

<sup>3</sup> School Food Plan. “Resources - School Food Plan.” The Independent School Food Plan, 2016.

<http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/resources/>.

<sup>4</sup> Department of Education. “School Food in England.” GOV.UK, August 26, 2021.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/standards-for-school-food-in-england/school-food-in-england>.

<sup>5</sup> Department of Education. “School Food in England.” GOV.UK, August 26, 2021.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/standards-for-school-food-in-england/school-food-in-england>.

Infant Free School Meal (UIFSM) scheme is a free school meal program for students in the first three years of school, typically from age 4-7. The School Food Regulations (2014) requires that all students in Reception, Year 1, and Year 2 in state-funded schools receive a free lunch.<sup>6</sup> Policy makers and governments overwhelmingly support this free lunch program in the first three years of school but have been resistant about extending this to other years.<sup>7</sup> In response, a range of diverse organisations from civil society, non-profit organisations, academics, and other stakeholders have come together under the ‘School Food Review Working Group’ to speak with a unified voice and campaign for school meals reform in England. The Working Group focuses on five interconnected pillars that require policy attention and that cover the whole school food system<sup>8</sup> (see Figure 1). Government has received these recommendations for review:

Figure 1 - Five Pillars of the School Food System that require reform<sup>9</sup>

| <b>Pillar</b>               | <b>Change Required</b>  |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Entitlement of School Meals | The eligibility criteria that currently exclude millions of children who would benefit.   |
| Procurement and Operations  | Procurement, operations, and contract management, that can fail to deliver consistently nutritious, sustainable and enjoyable food to our children. |
| Accountability Mechanisms   | Accountability and quality assurance, to support quality provision, and ensure that children receive nutritionally balanced food at school.         |
| Uptake                      | The administrative and stigmatic barriers to children accessing school food.  |
| Funding                     | The convoluted funding system does not guarantee delivery of good nutrition on children’s plates.   |

A White Paper entitled Levelling Up (2022) includes several important clauses:

- Schools are required to publish reports on arrangements for their ‘whole school approach’ to show accountability.
- Funding worth £200,000 for training and supporting school governors in their role to create a whole school approach to food.
- Funding worth £5 million to support food teachers so that all children learn how to cook six recipes while in school.

<sup>6</sup> Department of Education. “School Food in England.” GOV.UK, August 26, 2021.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/standards-for-school-food-in-england/school-food-in-england>.

<sup>7</sup> Bremner, Myles. “England’s School Food Program.” Presented at the England’s School Food Program Webinar - School Food Around the World, Lessons for Canada, Coalition for Healthy School Food, September 28, 2022.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4d8fPd7f7xA>.

<sup>8</sup> Bremner, M. “England’s School Food Program

<sup>9</sup> Slater, Stephanie. “School Food Matters.” Presented at the England’s School Food Program Webinar - School Food Around the World, Lessons for Canada, Coalition for Healthy School Food, September 28, 2022.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4d8fPd7f7xA>.

- Collaboration between schools, the Department of Education and Food Standards agency to ensure greater compliance with the School Food Standards.<sup>10</sup>

A National Food Strategy was completed in July 2021 and led by Henry Dimbleby,<sup>11</sup> the author of the School Food Plan; it presented many progressive ideas including the following recommendations:

- Make schools work with food standard accreditation schemes,
- Reinstate food A-level courses,
- Require a cookery lead in every school,
- Funding for students' ingredients,
- Increase free school meals threshold to £20,000,
- Double fruit and vegetable scheme funding,
- Inspect cooking classes with equal rigour as English and maths,
- Extend holiday activities and food programs.

To date there has been little uptake on most of these (except the last) by the government and the School Food Review Working Group continues to advocate for these reforms.<sup>12</sup>

## **Funding**

It is estimated that £4 billion is spent in the School Food System, of which the government (primarily through the Ministry of Education) provides almost £1.5 billion, while roughly £2.3 billion is covered by the monies paid for school meals. The total amount contributed by communities, non-profit organisations, local authorities, and businesses is unknown. The school food program related to family income allows students whose families have a household income of less than £7,400 to apply for free school meals throughout the duration of their education. The proportion of students who apply and are deemed eligible for this program continues to increase each year, from 20.8% in 2021 to 22.5% in 2022.<sup>13</sup> However, the Child Poverty Action Group estimates that one-third of children living in poverty in England cannot access free school meals under this program.<sup>14</sup>

Funding for school meals is complicated and funds are available through a complex system of policy and nutrition avenues resulting in some schools being unaware of potential funds

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<sup>10</sup> Slater, Stephanie. "School Food Matters." Presented at the England's School Food Program Webinar - School Food Around the World, Lessons for Canada, Coalition for Healthy School Food, September 28, 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4d8fPd7f7xA>.

<sup>11</sup> Henry Dimbleby was an award winning chef and restaurant owner before writing both the School Food Plan (2013) and National Food Strategy (2021), an independent review for the government. He founded the charity Chefs in Schools in 2018.

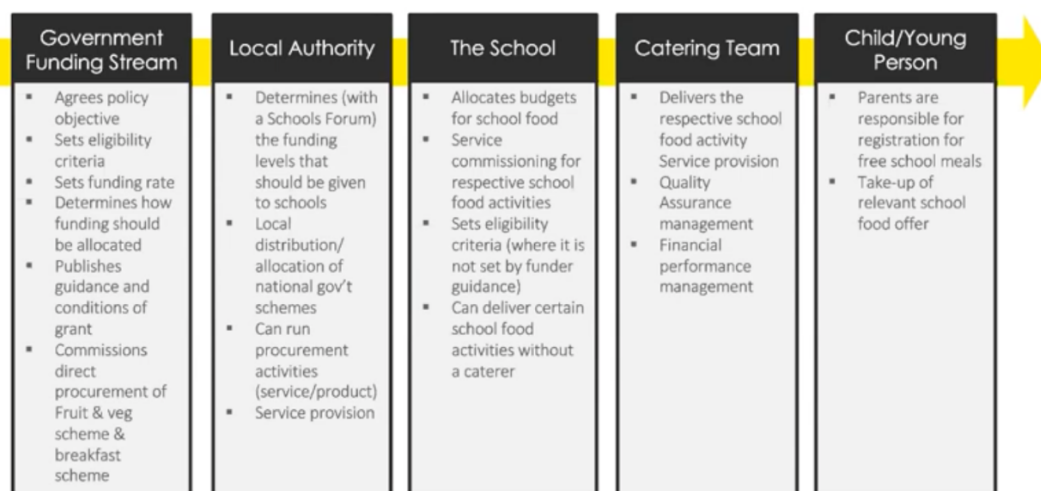
<sup>12</sup> Slater, S. "School Food Matters."

<sup>13</sup> Bremner, Myles. "England's School Food Program." Presented at the England's School Food Program Webinar - School Food Around the World, Lessons for Canada, Coalition for Healthy School Food, September 28, 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4d8fPd7f7xA>.

<sup>14</sup> Slater, S. "School Food Matters."

available.<sup>15</sup> Figure 2 provides an overview of how funds move through the school food system. There are no formal guidelines for the cost of a school meal, though some schools use the rate set by the government for the free infant school meals of £2.41 per meal.<sup>16</sup> Funding for the income-based school meals program is contained in a wider ‘Dedicated School Grant’ and is roughly £2.47 per meal. Despite the rising costs of food and labour, this rate has remained essentially unchanged since 2014 when it was £2.30. There are discrepancies in the cost charged for school meals, ranging from £1.60 - £3.00 in primary schools and £1.80-£3.05 in secondary school (in 2021).<sup>17</sup> The National School Milk Subsidy Scheme assists with the cost of providing milk in schools. The Department of Health’s Nursery Milk Scheme provides free milk to children under the age of 5 at participating schools and childcare settings. The Department of Health also administers a School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme, which allows children between 4-6 years old in state-funded infant, primary and special schools to receive a free piece of fruit or vegetable every school day in addition to the school lunch.<sup>18</sup>

Figure 2 - Movement of funds through school food system<sup>19</sup>



## Food Literacy Education

Learning to cook and grow food was one of the key recommendations in the School Food Plan (2013) and food education is compulsory with cooking as a mandatory part of the curriculum. Public Health England provides a guidance document for Food Teachers in secondary schools to

<sup>15</sup> Bremner, Myles. “England’s School Food Program.” Presented at the England’s School Food Program Webinar - School Food Around the World, Lessons for Canada, Coalition for Healthy School Food, September 28, 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4d8fPd7f7xA>.

<sup>16</sup> GOV.UK. “Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM): 2022 to 2023.” GOV.UK, June 2022. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-infant-free-school-meals-uifsm-2022-to-2023>.

<sup>17</sup> Bremner, M. “England’s School Food Program.”

<sup>18</sup> Department of Education. “School Food in England.” GOV.UK, August 26, 2021. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/standards-for-school-food-in-england/school-food-in-england>.

<sup>19</sup> Bremner, M. “England’s School Food Program.”

facilitate exemplary food teaching.<sup>20</sup> Food literacy education began before the School Food Plan by the charity sector and non-profits continue to carry out this work. The charity School Food Matters has been teaching children about healthy and sustainable food for 16 years, while also acting as a voice for children, parents, and teachers as they advocate for government policy change. Their approach to food education includes learning about cooking, pollinators, and food enterprise. They also provide food growing courses and funding for edible gardens at schools. The Levelling Up paper allocated £5 million to school food teachers and £200,000 to school governors to support their development of a whole school food approach.<sup>21</sup> Chefs in Schools is a 5-year-old national charity co-founded by Henry Dimbleby, author of the School Food Plan, that considers linking food and education as essential. The operational model for Chefs in School is to link school kitchens with classrooms. They work to ‘train-up’ school kitchen teams and campaign around school food quality.<sup>22</sup>

## Nutrition

School Food Standards (federal standards) outline several guidelines for nutrition and meal content that should result in students developing healthy eating habits. School meals and snacks should look and taste good and have sufficient nutrients and energy content to support students throughout their school day. Foods provided should vary throughout the week with a priority on fresh, sustainable and locally sourced ingredients, including from school gardens.<sup>23</sup> A resource entitled “Sustainable procurement: the Government Buying Standards” (GBS) includes guidance on how to reduce salt, saturated fat, and sugar in foods prepared for schools.<sup>24</sup> In addition there are standards and guidance regarding portion sizes and food groups; allergy guidance; cooking healthy, tasty and varied meals; and checklists for lunch and non-lunch school foods.<sup>25</sup> Chefs in Schools works with schools across England to find the foods that work best for each specific school population and train school kitchen staff on how to best prepare them.<sup>26</sup>

The food-based standards outline types of foods to be served for a balanced diet including:

- Plenty of fruit and vegetables,
- unrefined starchy foods,

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<sup>20</sup> British Nutrition Foundation. “Food Teaching in Secondary Schools: A Framework of Knowledge and Skills.” London: Public Health England, 2015.

<sup>21</sup> Slater, Stephanie. “School Food Matters.” Presented at the England’s School Food Program Webinar - School Food Around the World, Lessons for Canada, Coalition for Healthy School Food, September 28, 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4d8fPd7f7xA>.

<sup>22</sup> Duncan, Naomi. “Chefs in Schools - Implementing a School Food Program.” Presented at the England’s School Food Program Webinar - School Food Around the World, Lessons for Canada, Coalition for Healthy School Food, September 28, 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4d8fPd7f7xA>.

<sup>23</sup> GOV.UK. “School Food Standards Practical Guide.” GOV.UK, May 2022. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-food-standards-resources-for-schools/school-food-standards-practical-guide>.

<sup>24</sup> GOV.UK. “Sustainable Procurement: The Government Buying Standards (GBS).” GOV.UK, 2017. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/sustainable-procurement-the-government-buying-standards-gbs>.

<sup>25</sup> GOV.UK. “School Food Standards: Resources for Schools.” GOV.UK, May 2022. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-food-standards-resources-for-schools>.

<sup>26</sup> Duncan, N. “Chefs in Schools”

- some meat, fish, eggs, beans, and other non-dairy sources of protein,
- some milk and dairy foods,
- a small amount of food and drink high in fat, sugar, and salt.

The standards also specify what should be excluded or reduced in school meals including:

- No drinks with added sugar, crisps, chocolate or sweets in school meals and vending machines.
- No more than 2 portions of deep-fried, battered, or breaded food a week.<sup>27</sup>

A detailed outline of School Lunch Standards is available in Appendix 3. In addition, Guidance on portion sizes and food groups is provided in Appendix 4. Although these standards are in place, there is no oversight by school inspectors of food nutrition content.<sup>28</sup>

### **Implementation**

The Department of Education has primary responsibility for school food programs; it sets the thresholds for the income-based free school meals programs, determines funding rates for school food interventions, sets school food standards, and outlines the roles and responsibilities of Local Authorities and schools who implement the programs. Following the School Food Standards, local governing bodies make decisions on what school lunches and other foods offered at schools look like. Ideally, governing bodies work with senior school leadership to develop plans for a whole school food policy. There are 152 Local Authorities (LAs) in England, and they have a statutory obligation regarding children’s safeguarding and wellbeing. The public health teams within LAs may actively engage in supporting school food programs specifically around nutrition and health issues.<sup>29</sup>

According to national charity Chefs in Schools, each school has its own model, but most schools share the following:

- Most primary schools offer a choice of hot meat or vegetarian dish or snack meal plus a dessert for a fixed price.
- Most secondary schools have a cafeteria approach or ‘market style’ with various hot and cold food choices each day.
- Most schools have a dining hall.
- Some schools have a ‘family dining’ atmosphere where children sit together and share food.

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<sup>27</sup> GOV.UK. “School Food Standards Practical Guide.” GOV.UK, May 2022.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-food-standards-resources-for-schools/school-food-standards-practical-guide>.

<sup>28</sup> Slater, Stephanie. “School Food Matters.” Presented at the England’s School Food Program Webinar - School Food Around the World, Lessons for Canada, Coalition for Healthy School Food, September 28, 2022.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4d8fPd7f7xA>.

<sup>29</sup> Bremner, Myles. “England’s School Food Program.” Presented at the England’s School Food Program Webinar - School Food Around the World, Lessons for Canada, Coalition for Healthy School Food, September 28, 2022.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4d8fPd7f7xA>.

- Rarely do schools have children eating in classrooms.<sup>30</sup>

Though school food programs look a little different in each school, the key to success in any school is that school leaders take responsibility for embedding a great school food culture.<sup>31</sup> The School Food Plan provides a Checklist for Head Teachers (see Appendix 3) as a guide for what needs to happen. The three principles at the core of a great school food culture that a Head Teacher should follow are: lead the change; concentrate on the things children care about; and adopt a ‘whole school’ approach.<sup>32</sup>

The whole school approach requires the following to work well:

- School leaders must understand and believe that good food helps kids learn.
- Each school needs a vision for what good school food looks like written by school leadership.
- Sufficient time must be allowed for the lunch break.
- Teachers are encouraged to eat with students.
- There are links between the school kitchen and the school curriculum.<sup>33</sup>

Guidance is provided by the Department of Education on adopting a whole school food approach. It includes questions to consider for leadership, food provision, food education, and wider well-being.<sup>34</sup>

## Oversight

The Department of Education has policy control of school food programs, but different departments also get involved as mentioned above. The Department of Food and Agriculture and the Department for Health and Social Care make contributions to the standards, including in policy, such as food health, procurement guidance, and safety standards, but they do not have jurisdiction over school food policy.<sup>35</sup> Local Governing bodies can decide what school lunches

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<sup>30</sup> Duncan, Naomi. “Chefs in Schools - Implementing a School Food Program.” Presented at the England’s School Food Program Webinar - School Food Around the World, Lessons for Canada, Coalition for Healthy School Food, September 28, 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4d8fPd7f7xA>.

<sup>31</sup> Bremner, Myles. “England’s School Food Program.” Presented at the England’s School Food Program Webinar - School Food Around the World, Lessons for Canada, Coalition for Healthy School Food, September 28, 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4d8fPd7f7xA>.

<sup>32</sup> School Food Plan. “A Checklist for Head Teachers.” School Food Plan What Works Well, 2016. <http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/SFP-Headteacher-Checklist.pdf>.

<sup>33</sup> Duncan, Naomi. “Chefs in Schools - Implementing a School Food Program.” Presented at the England’s School Food Program Webinar - School Food Around the World, Lessons for Canada, Coalition for Healthy School Food, September 28, 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4d8fPd7f7xA>.

<sup>34</sup> GOV.UK. “Creating a Culture and Ethos of Healthy Eating.” GOV.UK, May 2022. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-food-standards-resources-for-schools/creating-a-culture-and-etos-of-healthy-eating>.

<sup>35</sup> Bremner, M. “England’s School Food Program.”

look like as long as they meet the School Food Standards. Hot lunches are encouraged when possible as students should ideally have one hot meal every day.<sup>36</sup>

There should be more oversight and a process in place to ensure that catering services are coordinated across all school food and drink outlets to ensure that compliance with the school food standards is maintained.<sup>37</sup>

## Challenges

Several challenges exist with England's school food programs and are outlined below in Table 1.

**Table 1 - Challenges in England's School Food Program**

|  |
|--|
| <b>Income threshold for means tested school meals</b> - The income threshold for low-income families is considered too low and results in one-third of children in poverty not being able to access the program. There is a call for all children living in poverty to be eligible for free school meals immediately. <sup>38,39</sup> |
| <b>Limited universal free school meals</b> - Free school meals are only available to all students regardless of family income in the first three years of school and there are calls to extend this to include all school years. <sup>40</sup>   |
| <b>Accountability</b> - There can be uncertainty around roles and responsibilities of school governors and staff leading to a lack of accountability. <sup>41</sup>  |
| <b>School Food Standards</b> - The school food standards are not always followed, and poor food quality occurs in some schools with no monitoring currently in place. <sup>42</sup>  |

<sup>36</sup> Department of Education. "School Food in England." GOV.UK, August 26, 2021.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/standards-for-school-food-in-england/school-food-in-england>.

<sup>37</sup> Department of Education. "School Food in England." GOV.UK, August 26, 2021.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/standards-for-school-food-in-england/school-food-in-england>.

<sup>38</sup> Slater, Stephanie. "School Food Matters." Presented at the England's School Food Program Webinar - School Food Around the World, Lessons for Canada, Coalition for Healthy School Food, September 28, 2022.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4d8fPd7f7xA>.

<sup>39</sup> Kenton-Lake, Simon, Josephine Heger, Rebecca Tobi, and Indu Gurung. "FEEDING OUR FUTURE An InVEGtigation into UK School Food 2021." Peas Please, 2021.

<sup>40</sup> Slater, S. "School Food Matters."

<sup>41</sup> Duncan, Naomi. "Chefs in Schools - Implementing a School Food Program." Presented at the England's School Food Program Webinar - School Food Around the World, Lessons for Canada, Coalition for Healthy School Food, September 28, 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4d8fPd7f7xA>.

<sup>42</sup> Duncan, N. "Chefs in Schools"



Appendices: Appendix 1 - Historical Overview of School Food Policy in England (adapted and summarized from Holland (2022) (1870-2001) and (Bremner, 2022) (2000-2022))

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|--|
| 1870 - Forster Education Act makes primary education compulsory in Britain.  |
| 1906 - British Parliament passes the Education Provision of Meals Act making school meal provision mandatory, and Local Education Authorities (LEAs) responsible for providing primary school children with free meals. School canteen committees form and roughly one third of LEAs begin to immediately provide school meals, which are made up of a hot meal (often porridge), bread and a glass of milk.                             |
| 1944 - The new National School Meals Policy is created directing LEAs to extend school food provision to everyone either free or at a subsidized rate, milk remains free.<br>The Education Act lays out nutritional guidelines, though even after food rationing ends ten years later meals are not very healthy.  |
| 1964 to 1970 - The Labour party requires parents to pay for school meals making access difficult for many. Free milk ends in secondary schools in 1968, and in 1971 for primary schools.   |
| 1980 - The Education Act ends the requirement that children in school have access to school meals, unless their families receive government benefits. This results in some counties getting rid of school meals completely. School meal production can be done by private contractors, making quality and nutritional oversight difficult.   |
| 1980s - Increase is seen in processed foods, fast food options at school, and soft drinks, with fewer students opting for the school meal available.   |
| 1986 - The Social Security Act results in the loss of free school meals to 500,000 children from low-income families.  |
| 1999 - A UK report reveals the diet of the average 4 year old is less healthy in the 1990's than it was in the 1950's.   |
| 2000-2010 - New school meal standards introduced.<br>Chef Jamie Oliver's launches 'Jamie's School Dinners' documentary, advocating for schools to achieve national food standards and encouraging kids to get excited about healthy food.<br>Nutrition based School Food Standards introduced.<br>The School Food Trust is established and funded by to monitor and report on new Standards.<br>Free School meal funding is ring-fenced. |
| 2010-2013 - The School Food Trust is eliminated resulting in no data or reporting on school meals.<br>Free school meal funding is no longer ring-fenced and schools decide how to allocate funds.  |
| 2013 - The School Food Plan is published (Dimpleby & Vincent, 2013) and School Food Standards in 2014 includes universal free school meals for Infants valued at £2.30/meal, compulsory food education, and new school food standards. School Governors have responsibility for school food and school food catering begins to improve as quality assurance standards are implemented.   |
| 2015-2020 - A new Healthy Rating Scheme and new School Food Standards are planned but then delayed.  |
| 2020-present - National Food Strategy calls for all students whose families receive government benefits to qualify for free school meals.<br>Holiday Activity Fund allocates £200 million for providing activities and free meals outside of school terms.   |

Appendix 2- School Food Standards (School Food Plan, 2016)



# The School Food Standards

*Eating in school should be a pleasurable experience: time spent sharing good food with peers and teachers.*

*These school food standards are intended to help children develop healthy eating habits and ensure that they get the energy and nutrition they need across the whole school day. It is just as important to eat, feel their food good and taste delicious, to talk to children about what is on offer and recommend dishes, to reduce portion, and to serve the food in a pleasant environment where they can eat with their friends.*

*In a general principle, it is important to provide a wide range of food across the week. Variety is key – whether it is different fruits, vegetables, grains, pulses or types of meat and fish. Children like to hear the stories behind their food. Fish, fresh, sustainable and locally sourced vegetables (that of all, from the school vegetable garden), and talk to them about where they are coming. Go to [www.schoolfoodplan.com/news](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/news) to find examples of what other schools are doing to encourage children to eat well.*

*Remember to use Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services alongside these standards to help reduce salt, saturated fat and sugar in children's diets.*

*\* This Standard applies across the whole school day, including breakfasts, morning breaks, snack times, and after-school clubs.*



### Fruit and vegetables

One or more portions of vegetables or salad as an accompaniment every day

One or more portions of fruit every day

A dessert containing at least 30% fruit (not as more than once each week)

At least three different fruits and three different vegetables each week



### Milk and dairy

A portion of food from this group every day

Lower fat milk must be available for drinking at least once a day during school hours



### Starchy food

One or more wholegrain varieties of starchy food each week

One or more portions of food from this group every day

Three or more different starchy foods each week

Starchy food cooked in fat or oil no more than two days each week\*

Bread – with no added fat or oil – must be available every day



### Foods high in fat, sugar and salt

No more than two portions of food that has been deep-fried, batter-coated, or breaded/coated, each week\*

No more than two portions of food which include pastry each week\*

No snacks, except nuts, seeds, vegetables and fruit with no added salt, sugar or fat\*

Nut-free crackers or biscuits can be served at lunch with fruit or vegetables or dairy food

No confectionery, chocolate or chocolate coated products\*

Desserts, cakes and biscuits are allowed at lunchtimes. They must not contain any confectionery

Salt must not be available to add to food after it has been cooked\*

Any confectionery must be limited to sweets or portions of no more than 10g or one teaspoon\*



### Meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non dairy sources of protein

A portion of food from this group every day

A portion of meat or poultry on three or more days each week

Only fish once or more every three weeks

For vegetables, a portion of non-dairy protein on three or more days each week

A meat or poultry product (manufactured or homemade, and meeting the legal requirements) no more than once each week in primary schools and twice each week in secondary schools\*



### Healthier drinks\*

Fresh, fresh drinking water at all times

The only drinks permitted are:

- Plain water (still or carbonated)
- Lower fat milk or lactose reduced milk
- Fruit or vegetable juice (max 150ml)
- Plain soy, rice or oat drinks enriched with calcium, plain fermented milk (e.g. yoghurt) drinks
- Combinations of fruit or vegetable juice with plain water (still or carbonated, with no added sugar or honey)
- Combinations of fruit juice and lower fat milk or plain yoghurt, plain soy, rice or oat drinks enriched with calcium, cream and lower fat milk, flavoured lower fat milk, all with less than 1% added sugar or honey
- Tea, coffee, hot chocolate

Combination drinks are limited to a portion size of 150ml. They may contain added vitamins or minerals, and no more than 150kcal from or vegetable juice. Fruit or vegetable juice-combination drinks must be at least 15% fruit or vegetable juice

### Food provided outside lunch

- Fruit and/or vegetables available in all school food outlets
- No nut-free crackers and biscuits
- No cakes, biscuits, pastries or desserts (except yoghurt or fruit-based desserts containing at least 30% fruit)



<sup>43</sup> School Food standards. 2014. From [http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/School\\_Food\\_Standards\\_140911-V2e-tea-towel.pdf](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/School_Food_Standards_140911-V2e-tea-towel.pdf)

## Appendix 3 - School Lunch Standards<sup>44</sup>

| <b>Starchy foods</b>  |  |
|---|--|
| <p>Starchy food is an important source of energy and B vitamins. Flour is fortified with iron and calcium. Whole Grain varieties of bread and pasta are good sources of fibre, which is important for a healthy digestive system. Starchy foods help children feel full, so they are less likely to snack on foods high in fat, saturated fat, sugar or salt. Do not add salt to water when cooking pasta, rice and other starchy foods. Instead, add flavour to the main dish by using herbs, spices, garlic and vegetables.</p> |  |
| <p><b>You should include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- one or more portions of food from this group every day</li> <li>- 3 or more different starchy foods each week</li> <li>- one or more wholegrain varieties of starchy food each week</li> <li>- starchy food cooked in fat or oil no more than 2 days each week (applies across the whole school day)</li> <li>- bread - with no added fat or oil - must be available every day</li> </ul>  | <p><b>You can:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- use whole grain varieties of starchy foods</li> <li>- try using a 50:50 mix for pasta and rice</li> <li>- use at least half wholemeal or granary flour when making bread, puddings, cakes, biscuits, batters and sauces</li> <li>- use different types of bread and look for products with higher fibre</li> </ul> |

| <b>Fruit and vegetables</b>   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>Getting children to eat more fruit and vegetables is vital for good health. Introducing children to a wide variety of fruit and vegetables establishes healthy eating habits for life, reducing the risk of heart disease, stroke and some cancers. Fruit and vegetables are a good source of essential vitamins and minerals. They are also often a good source of fibre. Fruit and vegetables add colour, flavour and variety to meals. Pulses count as vegetables. However, if you are serving pulses as a non-dairy protein for vegetarians, you will need a separate vegetable serving as well. Do not serve baked beans more than once a week and choose low-sugar and low-salt varieties.</p> |   |
| <p><b>You should include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- one or more portions of vegetables or salad as an accompaniment every day</li> <li>- one or more portions of fruit every day</li> <li>- a dessert containing at least 50% fruit 2 or more times each week</li> <li>- at least 3 different fruits and 3 different vegetables each week</li> </ul>   | <p><b>You can:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- make sure your meal deals always contain at least one portion of vegetables and one portion of fruit</li> <li>- provide at least 2 different coloured vegetables and fruits each day</li> <li>- buy fruit and vegetables that are in season</li> <li>- choose canned products in water or natural juice, with no added salt or sugar</li> <li>- steam vegetables or boil them in a minimal amount of water</li> <li>- display fruit and vegetables prominently and attractively</li> <li>- talk to the children to encourage them to try new vegetable and fruit dishes</li> <li>- use produce from the school garden to encourage children to try new vegetables and fruit</li> <li>- price a portion of fruit so that it is cheaper than a dessert</li> <li>- add lots of vegetables into composite dishes such as Bolognese or chilli con carne</li> </ul> |

<sup>44</sup> GOV.UK. "School Food Standards Practical Guide." GOV.UK, May 2022.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-food-standards-resources-for-schools/school-food-standards-practical-guide>.

### Meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein

Foods from this group provide protein and essential minerals, including iron and zinc. Oily fish provides omega-3 fatty acids, which are beneficial to health, and vitamins A and D. Be aware that canned tuna is not an oily fish as the omega-3 fatty acids are destroyed in the canning process.

#### You should include:

- a portion of food from this group every day
- a portion of meat or poultry on 3 or more days each week
- oily fish once or more every 3 weeks
- for vegetarians, a portion of non-dairy protein on 3 or more days each week
- a meat or poultry product (manufactured or homemade, and meeting the legal requirements) no more than once each week in primary schools and twice each week in secondary schools (applies across the whole school day)

#### You can:

- ensure vegetarian meals are as varied as the rest of the menu by using pulses twice a week, soya, tofu, or mycoprotein-based meat substitute once or twice each week, and eggs and cheese once or twice each week
- encourage all children to have a meat-free day each week, using alternatives such as pulses, soya mince, tofu and mycoprotein-based meat substitute
- visit the Marine Stewardship Council for advice on buying responsibly sourced fish

### Healthy drinks

Water should be the default drink for every child. Free, fresh drinking water must be available at all times. The more it is offered, the more readily they will accept it. Sugary or sweetened drinks often have no nutritional value, contribute to weight gain, and can cause tooth decay.

#### The only drinks permitted are:

- plain water (still or carbonated)
- lower fat milk or lactose reduced milk
- fruit or vegetable juice (maximum 150mls)
- plain soya, rice or oat drinks enriched with calcium
- plain fermented milk (for example yoghurt) drinks
- combinations of fruit or vegetable juice with plain water (with no added sugars or honey)
- combinations of fruit juice and lower fat milk or plain yoghurt, plain soya, rice or oat drinks enriched with calcium; cocoa and lower fat milk; flavoured lower fat milk, all with less than 5% added sugars or honey
- tea, coffee, hot chocolate

Combination drinks are limited to a portion size of 330mls. They may contain added vitamins or minerals, and no more than 150mls of fruit or vegetable juice. Fruit or vegetable juice combination drinks must be at least 45% fruit or vegetable juice.

#### You can:

- provide jugs of fresh tap water together with cups or glasses on tables and at the serving counter
- consider installing a water cooler which uses tap water, or water fountains encouraging the use of refillable bottles
- provide drinks that are unsweetened, unfortified and additive-free
- avoid drinks containing preservatives, flavourings, colourings and sweeteners

### Milk and dairy

Dairy foods are a rich source of energy, protein, calcium, vitamin A and riboflavin. Hard cheeses such as cheddar tend to be higher in saturated fat than softer cheese. When using hard cheeses, choose stronger-tasting varieties and use smaller amounts.

#### You should include:

- a portion of food from this group every day
- lower fat milk, which must be available for drinking at least once a day during school hours

#### You can:

- offer frozen yoghurt as an alternative to ice cream
- buy low-sugar varieties of milkshakes and yoghurt drinks. You could make them yourself using fruit to sweeten them

### Foods high in fat, sugar and salt

Foods from this group are often high in energy (calories) but provide few other nutrients. Reducing saturated fat intake can help reduce the risk of heart disease. Eating unsaturated fats instead, which are found in foods such as oily fish, nuts and seeds, and sunflower and olive oils, can help lower blood cholesterol. Too much salt can encourage a taste for salty foods, potentially leading to high blood pressure in later life. High sugar intake provides unnecessary calories and can lead to weight gain and tooth decay.

#### You should include:

- no more than 2 portions of food that have been deep-fried, batter-coated, or breadcrumb-coated, each week (applies across the whole school day)
- no more than 2 portions of food which include pastry each week (applies across the whole school day)
- savoury crackers or breadsticks, which can be served at lunch with fruit, vegetables or dairy food
- desserts, cakes and biscuits but they must not contain any confectionery

#### You should avoid:

- snacks, except nuts, seeds, vegetables and fruit with no added salt, sugar or fat (applies across the whole school day)
- confectionery, chocolate or chocolate-coated products (applies across the whole school day)
- You must not provide salt to add to food after it has been cooked (applies across the whole school day).
- Any condiments must be limited to sachets or portions of no more than 10 grams or one teaspoonful (applies across the whole school day).
- Do not use flavour enhancers such as MSG or E621. These can be very high in sodium.

#### You can:

- choose mono- and poly-unsaturated fats, such as rapeseed, soya, sunflower and olive oils, when possible for cooking or salad dressings
- avoid products that list partially hydrogenated fat or oil on the label
- use higher fibre ingredients, such as wholemeal flour, in addition to, or instead of, white flour
- reduce the amount of sugar used in dishes
- use fresh or dried fruit to sweeten dishes
- ask suppliers for nutritional information and read food labels to check the amount of fat, saturated fat, salt and sugars in their products
- use herbs, spices, garlic, vegetables and fruits to add flavour to dishes instead of salt
- choose biscuits, cakes and pastries that are lower in fat, saturated fat, sugar and salt

## School food other than lunch

Many of the food-based standards apply to food served throughout the school day, including breakfast, midmorning break and after school clubs, as well as from vending machines and tuck shops.

### You can:

Use the checklist for school food other than lunch.

As with the other food standards, these do not apply at parties, celebrations to mark religious or cultural occasions, or at fund-raising events.

### Starchy foods

You should not serve starchy food cooked in fat or oil more than 2 days each week (applies across the whole school day). Porridge is a great breakfast food. Use fruit to sweeten if necessary. Otherwise, choose fortified breakfast cereals with higher fibre and low or medium sugar content. Avoid cereals with lots of added sugar and salt.

### You can serve:

potatoes  
rice  
pasta  
bread (although these are restricted if cooked in fat or oil)  
malt loaf  
fruit bread

### Fruit and vegetables

Fruit and vegetables should be available in all school food outlets.

### You can serve:

pots of sliced or chopped fresh fruit; fruit kebabs  
vegetable sticks with dips  
salad shaker pots

### Milk and dairy

Lower fat milk must be available for drinking at least once a day during school hours.

### You can serve:

lower fat natural (plain) yoghurt and plain lower fat fromage, and add fruit to sweeten

### Meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein

You cannot serve a meat or poultry product (manufactured or homemade) more than once each week in primary schools, and twice each week in secondary schools (applies across entire school day).

### You can serve:

A variety of sandwiches and wraps  
muffin fillings or toast toppings, such as eggs, houmous, sliced meat, poultry, fish, canned fish, baked beans; tortillas, fajitas, burritos, quesadillas, enchiladas, omelette, frittata

### Foods high in fat, sugar and salt

You should not serve:

- more than 2 portions of food that has been deep-fried, batter-coated, breadcrumb-coated, each week (applies across the whole school day)
- more than 2 portions of food which include pastry each week (applies across the whole school day)
- snacks, except nuts, seeds, vegetables and fruit with no added salt, sugar or fat (applies across the whole school day)
- savoury crackers or breadsticks
- confectionery, chocolate and chocolate-coated products (applies across the whole school day)
- cakes, biscuits, pastries or desserts (except yoghurt or fruit-based desserts containing at least 50% fruit)

You must not provide salt to add to food after it has been cooked (applies across the whole school day).

Condiments should be limited to sachets or portions of no more than 10 grams or one teaspoonful (applies across the whole school day).

## Appendix 4 - Portion Sizes and Food Groups<sup>45</sup>

### Starchy foods



This includes all breads, potatoes, rice, couscous, bulgur wheat, semolina, tapioca, maize, cornmeal, noodles and pasta, oats, millet, barley, buckwheat, rye, spelt, plantain, yam, sweet potato, and cassava.

#### Typical portion sizes (grams/mls/household measures) raw and cooked food

| Food   |                    | Primary<br>4-10 year olds   | Secondary<br>11-18 year olds   |
|--|--------------------|---|--|
| <b>Bread:</b> includes white, wholemeal, granary, brown, wheatgerm, multigrain, potato bread, chapattis, plain baked naan, rotis, rolls, bagels, pitta, wraps  |                    | (50-70g)<br>1-2 slices of medium bread<br>1 small roll<br>1 small or ½ large bagel<br>1 small pitta<br>2 6" wraps<br>1 10" wrap | (80-100g)<br>2 thick slices of bread<br>1 large roll or sub roll<br>1 large bagel<br>1 large pitta<br>1 12" wrap |
| <b>Potatoes or sweet potato:</b><br>includes boiled and mashed   | Raw                | 120-170g  | 200-250g   |
| Jacket and baked potatoes  | Raw                | 200-280g  | 330-410g   |
| <b>Other starchy root vegetables:</b><br>includes yam, plantain, cocoyam and cassava   | Raw                | 100-150g  | 150-200g   |
| <b>Pasta and noodles:</b> includes white and wholemeal spaghetti, noodles and pasta shapes   | Dried <sup>1</sup> | 45-65g  | 65-80g   |
| <b>Rice:</b> includes white and brown rice   | Dried <sup>2</sup> | 35-55g  | 55-65g   |
| <b>Other grains:</b> includes couscous, bulgur wheat, maize (polenta) and cornmeal   | Dried              | 40-60g  | 60-70g   |
| <b>Starchy foods where fat or oil has been added before or during the cooking process:</b> include roast or sautéed potatoes, chips, potato wedges, pre-prepared potato products, fried rice, bread, or noodles, hash browns, garlic bread, Yorkshire pudding, chapattis and naan made with fat, pancakes and waffles cooked in oil. |                    |   |  |
| <b>Potatoes cooked in oil or fat:</b> includes roast or sautéed potatoes, chips, potato wedges, other processed potato products such as waffles  | Raw                | 70-100g   | 120-150g   |
| <b>Garlic bread</b> (as an accompaniment)  |                    | 20g<br>1 slice  | 40g<br>2 slices  |

**Bread with no added fat or oil must be available every day.** All types of plain bread with no added fat or oil, including brown, wholemeal, granary, white, mixtures of white and wholemeal, pitta, rolls, chapattis, naan, ciabatta, and herb bread.

Note: **Wholegrain:** starchy wholegrains include wholemeal and granary flours, wholemeal and granary breads and bread products, wholewheat pasta, brown rice and oats. Also look out for higher-fibre white bread, half/half wholegrain and white mixes such as 50/50 mix of brown and white rice, 50/50 whole wheat and white pasta.

<sup>1</sup> Based on average weight change of wholemeal and white spaghetti, pasta shapes and noodles

<sup>2</sup> Based on average weight change of white and brown rice

<sup>45</sup> School Food Plan. "Portion Sizes and Food Groups." The Independent School Food Plan, 2016. [http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Portion\\_Size\\_Poster-06012015\\_V1B.pdf](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Portion_Size_Poster-06012015_V1B.pdf).



## Fruit and Vegetables

**This includes vegetables in all forms, including fresh, frozen, canned, dried and juiced, as well as pulses such as beans and lentils.** Vegetables or salad should be offered as an accompaniment to every meal, in addition to any vegetables used as ingredients in composite dishes such as casseroles and stews. Potatoes are classed as a starchy food and are not included in this food group.

### Typical portion sizes (grams/mls/household measures) raw and cooked food

| Food   |                    | Primary<br>4-10 year olds                      | Secondary<br>11-18 year olds               |
|--|--------------------|--|--|
| Vegetables or mixed salad, salad bars  | Raw                | 40-60g   | 80g  |
| Vegetables including peas, green beans, sweetcorn, carrots, mixed vegetables, cauliflower, broccoli, swede, turnip, leek, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, spinach, spring greens  | Cooked             | 40-60g<br>1-2 tablespoons                      | 80g<br>2-3 tablespoons                     |
| Pulses include lentils, kidney beans, chick peas   | Dried <sup>3</sup> | 15-20g   | 30g  |
|  | Cooked             | 40-60g<br>1-2 tablespoons                      | 80g<br>3 tablespoons                       |
| Baked beans in tomato sauce<br>(as an accompaniment)   | Cooked             | 50-70g<br>1-2 tablespoons                      | 90-100g<br>3 tablespoons                   |
| Vegetable-based soup   | Cooked             | 200-250g                                       | 250-300g                                   |
| <b>Fruits</b> in all forms, including fresh, frozen, canned, dried and juiced. Fruits can be provided within other dishes - for example, fruit-based desserts such as crumbles.  |                    |  |  |
| Large-size fruit, e.g. apples, pears, bananas, peaches   | Raw                | 75-100g<br>1 small sized fruit with skin       | 100-150g<br>1 medium sized fruit with skin |
| Medium-size fruit, e.g. satsumas, tangerines, plums, apricots, kiwis   | Raw                | 50-100g<br>1 fruit with skin                   | 80-100g<br>1-2 fruits with skin            |
| Small fruits, e.g. strawberries, raspberries, grapes   | Raw                | 40-60g<br>10-15 fruits                         | 80g<br>15-20 fruits                        |
| Dried fruit, e.g. raisins, sultanas, apricots  | Dried              | 15-30g<br>¼ - 1 tablespoon                     | 25-30g<br>1 tablespoon                     |
| All fruit-based desserts should have a content of at least 50% fruit measured by weight of the raw ingredients (e.g. fruit crumble, fruit pie, fruit sponge, fruit cobbler, fruit jelly). Fruit used as decoration or jam added to a dessert does not count towards this standard. |                    |  |  |
| Fruit salad, fruit tinned in juice and stewed fruit  | Raw/cooked         | 65-100g<br>(40 g min fruit)<br>2-3 tablespoons | 130g<br>80g min fruit)<br>3-4 tablespoons  |

<sup>3</sup>Based on average weight change of chickpeas, kidney beans and green lentils



## Meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein

This includes fresh and frozen meat, poultry, fresh, frozen and canned fish, shellfish, eggs, meat alternatives (including products such as soya and Quorn™), tofu, pulses such as beans (cannellini, kidney, pinto, borlotti, haricot, butter, but not green beans), chickpeas, lentils (red, green, brown and puy) and nuts.

### Typical portion sizes (grams/mls/household measures) raw and cooked food

| Food   |            | Primary<br>4-10 year olds        | Secondary<br>11-18 year olds       |
|--|------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Roast red meat includes beef, lamb, pork, veal, venison and goat (this is also the portion size for baked potato and sandwich fillings).   | Raw        | 50-80g                           | 80-95g                             |
| Roast poultry includes chicken, turkey and duck, as well as dishes or products made from these meats (this is also the portion size for baked potato and sandwich fillings).   | Raw        | 60-85g                           | 85-125g                            |
| Red meat or poultry in dishes such as casserole, stew, pie, or curry. <b>Note:</b> <i>weight may be reduced proportionately in composite dishes if adding another protein based food, such as beans, cheese, or milk.</i>  | Raw        | 50-75g                           | 75-90g                             |
| Meat-based soup  | Cooked     | 200-250g                         | 250-300g                           |
| White fish such as pollock, hake, coley, cod, haddock and plaice – whether cooked alone, or in a dish such as a casserole or fish pie, or as a breaded or battered product   | Raw        | 60-90g                           | 90-125g                            |
| Oily fish, such as fresh, tinned or frozen salmon, sardines, pilchards, mackerel, herring, and fresh or frozen tuna. Tuna only counts as an oily fish when it is fresh or frozen because the omega-3 fatty acids are removed during the canning process  | Raw        | 55-80g                           | 80-110g                            |
| Fish or shellfish such as tuna, salmon, mackerel and prawns, served in a salad, baked potato or sandwich   | Cooked     | 50-70g                           | 70-100g                            |
| Breaded or battered fish portions and products such as fish cakes, fish fingers, and fish goujons.   | Cooked     | 55-80g                           | 85-95g                             |
| Egg served in a salad, baked potato or sandwich  | Cooked     | 1 egg                            | 1-2 eggs                           |
| Meat alternatives made from soya beans (such as soya mince and tofu) and Quorn™ (in dishes such as vegetarian casserole, stew, pie, or curry). <b>Note:</b> <i>weight may be reduced proportionately in composite dishes if adding another protein-based food such as beans, cheese, or milk</i> | Cooked     | 50-70g                           | 70-100g                            |
| Pulses such as beans (cannellini, kidney, pinto, borlotti, haricot, butter, but not green beans), chickpeas, lentils (red, green, brown and puy).  | Raw        | 20-25g                           | 40-45g                             |
|  | Cooked     | 50-60g<br>1-2 heaped tablespoons | 100-120g<br>2-3 heaped tablespoons |
| Vegetarian sausages, burgers, nut cutlets  | Raw/cooked | 50-70g                           | 70-100g                            |
| <b>Meat products</b>   |            |                                  |                                    |
| Sausages made from beef, lamb or pork  | Raw        | 50-75g<br>1 sausage              | 75-90g<br>1-2 sausages             |
| Burgers  | Raw        | 55-80g                           | 80-100g                            |
| Scotch pies, bridies, sausage rolls, Cornish pasty, encased meat pastry pies, cold pork pie (e.g. Melton Mowbray)  | Cooked     | 80g                              | 110g                               |
| Breaded or battered shaped chicken and turkey products, e.g. nuggets, goujons, burgers   | Cooked     | 50-70g                           | 70-100g                            |



### Milk and dairy

This includes all types of milk, cheese, yoghurt (including plain or fruit, frozen and drinking yoghurt), or fromage frais, milk-based sauces, custard (made with milk), puddings made from milk and milk-based sauces.

| Food   | Primary<br>4-10 year olds | Secondary<br>11-18 year olds |
|--|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Lower-fat drinking milk  | 150-200 mls               | 200-250 mls                  |
| Milk puddings and whips made with milk                                       | 100-120g                  | 120-150g                     |
| Custard made with milk (e.g. served with fruit); portion size excludes fruit | 80-100g                   | 100-120g                     |
| Yoghurts   | 80-120g                   | 120-150g                     |
| Cheese (added to salads, baked potatoes, sandwiches or crackers)             | 20-30g                    | 30-40g                       |



### Foods high in fat, sugar and salt

|  |                                      |   |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Deep fried foods:</b> including those deep fried or flash fried in the kitchen or in the manufacturing process, such as chips (including oven chips), potato waffles, hash browns, samosas, plantain chips, spring rolls, doughnuts, pakora and bhajis.   |                                      | Refer to relevant portion size table                                    |
| <b>Batter-coated and breadcrumb-coated foods:</b> including any bought-in or homemade products such as chicken nuggets, fish fingers, battered onion rings and tempura.  |                                      | Refer to relevant portion size table                                    |
| <b>Pastry:</b> including shortcrust, flaky, filo, choux and puff, used in quiches, meat pies, fruit pies, fruit tarts, sausage rolls, pasties, samosa.   |                                      | Refer to relevant portion size table                                    |
| <b>Desserts:</b> include cereal and starch based desserts such as rice, semolina, tapioca pudding, fruit-based desserts such as jelly, fruit compote, crumbles, and sponge puddings, vegetable-based desserts such as soya-based mousse, egg-based desserts such as ready to eat products and products prepared from egg such as flans, egg custard, custard fillings in pies, meringues, dairy-based desserts such as puddings with dairy-based fillings, fruit or flavoured yoghurt or other fermented milk and/or milk products, ice cream, mousse and fat-based desserts, such as ice cream, made with vegetable fats. |                                      |   |
| Fruit pies, sponge puddings or crumbles  | 80-100g                              | 100-120g  |
| Fruit jelly (portion size excludes fruit)  | 80-100g                              | 100-120g  |
| <b>Cakes and biscuits:</b> include manufactured, bought-in products and prepared from scratch cakes and biscuits such as individual cakes, buns and pastries, scones, sweet and savoury biscuits.  |                                      |   |
| Cakes, tray bakes, muffins, scones, doughnuts  | 40-50g                               | 50-60g  |
| Biscuits and flapjack  | 25-30g                               | 30-40g  |
| Ice cream  | 60-80g                               | 100g  |
| Pizza base   | 50-70g                               | 80-100g   |
| <b>Savoury crackers, bread sticks</b> (served with fruit, vegetables or dairy foods); portion size excludes fruit.   | 10-15g<br>1-2 crackers               | 15-30g<br>2-3 crackers  |
| <b>Condiments:</b> include ketchup, mayonnaise, salad cream, brown sauce, chutney.   | no more than 10g, or one teaspoonful |   |
| Gravy  | 20-30g<br>1 tablespoon               | 40-50g<br>2 tablespoons   |
| <b>'Snacks'</b> means pre-packaged items other than confectionery, sandwiches, cakes or biscuits, which are ready to eat without further preparation and which consist of or include as a basic ingredient potato, cereals, soya, nuts, seeds, fruit or vegetables.  |                                      | Refer to relevant portion size table for fruit, vegetables and crackers |
| <b>Confectionery:</b> includes cereal bars, processed fruit bars, non-chocolate confectionery (whether or not containing sugar), chocolate in any form (except hot chocolate), any product containing or wholly or partially coated with chocolate and any chocolate-flavoured substance. Cocoa is permitted.  |                                      | Not permitted - no portion sizes provided                               |



### Healthier Drinks

|   |             |             |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| Fruit/vegetable juice (maximum portion size)                                  | 150 mls     | 150 mls     |
| Drinking milk   | 150-200 mls | 200-250 mls |
| Combination drinks (fruit juice/water, flavoured milk) (maximum portion size) | 330 mls     | 330 mls     |

# A checklist for head teachers

We know how busy schools are. The idea of turning round your food service – or merely nudging it from good to great – may seem daunting. So we want to make it as easy as possible for you. What follows is a checklist of all the things we have seen working well at schools; specific actions that improve food culture in schools and increase take-up of school dinners.

This checklist is designed to be printed out and pinned up in your office, in the office of your business manager and in the school kitchen.

## Lead the change

In every school we went to that had a good food culture, the head teacher had led the change.

Obviously, not all of these actions are your responsibility; they can be shared across the school. Some are best done by the school cook, business manager, senior management team, or your external catering company, or even volunteers.

Get the right contract - drawing up a new contract is a risky time for your school food service, but also a moment of opportunity

Don't draw up a new contract alone – lots of other schools have done this before you, and found ways to get a good deal. Use an expert to help you draft it.

Ask your caterer to draw up a clear, written plan for increasing take-up over a set period.

Make it a contractual requirement for your caterer to achieve a certain standard of quality, as judged by an external organisation – e.g. Food for Life Partnership or Children's Food Trust.

Get specialist help. For details of organisations that can help you with contracts, cookery lessons, gardening or any other aspect of this checklist, go to [www.schoolfoodplan.com/www](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/www)

## Concentrate on the things children care about

### A. Food

Eat in the canteen often. Ask yourself whether the food looks appetising and tastes good.

Be sure there is a mix of familiar and new foods for the children, and that the catering staff encourage children to experiment.

Use local and seasonal suppliers, and make a song and dance about it. Children and their parents find the idea of local produce exciting (especially when it comes from the school garden), and are more likely to try it. When serving fish, avoid the most endangered (Marine Conservation Society red list), and promote the best (MCS green list, which includes Marine Stewardship Council certified fish).

Manage children's choices to ensure they get a balanced meal, instead of stuffing themselves full of bread rolls. Offer a cheaper 'set menu' meal; require children to fill their plates with options from different categories; or simply put vegetables on their plates.

Make sure packed lunches are not a 'better' option. Ban sugary drinks, crisps and confectionery, or offer prizes and other incentives for bringing in a healthy lunch. Some schools ban packed lunches outright. If you want to do this, try

starting with your newest intake (pupils in reception or year 7). The ban will then apply to all the years that follow them, until it extends to the whole school.

Watch what gets served at mid-morning break. Many children eat their main meal at this time. Too often, that means filling up on pizza, paninis or cake.

Ensure tap water is widely available at all times, make it the drink of choice across the school and encourage all children to keep well hydrated.

### B. Environment

Look around your dining hall. Is the room clean and attractive? Does it smell good?

Keep queuing times short. Try staggering lunch breaks; introducing more service points; serving food at the table, family-style; and reducing choice.

Have a cashless payment system. This shortens queuing times, enables parents to go online to see what their children are eating, and prevents FSM children being stigmatised.

Replace prison-style trays with proper crockery.



### C. Social life

Have a stay-on-site rule for break and lunch time.

Allow all children to sit together – don't segregate those with packed lunches.

Structure the lunch break so there is sufficient time for eating as well as activities or clubs. This may mean making the lunch break longer or timing the clubs differently.

Give special consideration to the youngest children, who might be intimidated by the noise and rush of lunch break.

### D. Get the price right

In secondary schools, consider subsidising school meals for year 7 pupils, to make them cheaper or free. Children who start eating school lunches often carry on, even once they have to pay.

Offer lunch discounts for parents with more than one child at the school, or whose children eat a school lunch every day.

### E. Improve the brand

Make menus available in advance to children and parents online.

Offer samples of the food for children to taste.

Encourage teachers to eat in the dining room with the children. It may require a cultural or logistical shift, but every single good school we visited did this. It has a unifying effect on the whole school, and raises the status of school meals.

Hold themed events – such as World Cup day, or international food day – to get the children excited.

Organise a group to represent children's views on school lunch, such as a school nutrition action group (SNAG) or a School Council.

Give children opportunities to prepare, cook or serve the food.

Get the community involved

Give parents, carers and grandparents the opportunity to taste school food and eat with the children at lunchtime and/or parents' evenings.

Invite family members to help with cooking or gardening clubs.

Seek out partners in the community who can help with cooking and growing activities, e.g. local restaurants, food producers, allotment growers.

Get local chefs in to teach in your school.

## Adopt a 'whole school' approach

This is a simple idea, but an important one. It means treating the dining hall as an integral part of the school, where children and teachers eat; lunch as part of the school day; the cooks as important staff members; and food as a vital element of school life.

Treat your cooks and lunchtime supervisors as part of your team, on a par with teachers and business managers. Do they come to staff meetings? Do they enter and leave by the same door as the rest of your staff? Have they received training and development recently?

Bring your school cook to parents' evenings – not to serve the food, but to answer questions from parents about their children's eating habits.

Make sure children get consistent messages about nutrition in lessons and at lunchtime.

Choose classroom rewards for children that are not sweets.

Grow food in your school, and use some in the school lunch.

Use cooking and growing as an exciting way to teach subjects across the curriculum – from history to maths, science to enterprise, technology to geography.

Offer after school cooking lessons for parents and children.

THE SCHOOL FOOD PLAN  
WHAT WORKS WELL

The 'What Works Well' website brings together the best ideas in school food and food education. It contains case studies, practical advice, and signposting to resources and support to help schools transform their food culture. [www.schoolfoodplan.com/www](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/www)

<sup>46</sup> School Food Plan. "A Checklist for Head Teachers." School Food Plan What Works Well, 2016. <http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/SFP-Headteacher-Checklist.pdf>.

## Appendix 6- Additional Resources, Guidelines and Templates (links embedded)

### **Government Resource guidance documents**

Including:

- School Food Standards Practical Guide (also see Appendix 4)
- Checklist for headteachers
- School Food: Guidance for governors
- Preparing varied and tasty menus
- Portion sizes and food groups guidance; Printable list
- Allergy guidance for schools
- Preparing for Food Supply Chain changes
- Checklists for School Lunches; One page Checklist
- Checklist for school food other than lunch
- Creating a culture and ethos of healthy eating; poster with same
- The School Food Standards poster

### **Food Information Regulations 2014**

**What Works Well Website** - dedicated to the School Food Plan resources and examples of what is working well.