



Department of  
**Education**

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AN ROINN  
**Oideachais**

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



Department of  
**Health, Social Services  
and Public Safety**

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AN ROINN  
**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta  
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

MÄNNYSTRIE O  
**Poustie, Resydènter Heisin  
an Fowk Siccar**

# EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS SCREENING TEMPLATE

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## FOOD IN SCHOOLS POLICY

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## **SCREENING TEMPLATE**

See the Screening Template Guidance Notes for further information on the 'why' 'what' 'when', and 'who' in relation screening, for background information on the relevant legislation and for help in answering the questions on this template (follow the links).

**(1) INFORMATION ABOUT THE POLICY/DECISION****1.1 Title of policy/decision**

Food in Schools Policy

**1.2 Description of policy/decision**

- what is it trying to achieve? (aims/objectives)
- how will this be achieved? (key elements)
- what are the key constraints? (e.g. financial, legislative)

**What is it trying to achieve?**

The Food in Schools policy sets out the overall aims and objectives of Executive policy in relation to food in schools and describes the range of strategies and plans that are being put in place to deliver improved nutrition for our school children.

It aims to ensure that school food is representative of the five food groups; makes a significant contribution to childhood nutrition and enables children to develop the necessary skills and knowledge to make healthy food choices both at school and at home.

**How will this be achieved?**

Education and Library Boards and Boards of Governors of voluntary grammar and grant maintained integrated schools will provide school meals that comply with the Nutritional Standards. Schools will ensure that other sources of food (eg vending machines) provide only healthy options. Parents will be informed about how to provide healthy lunches.

**What are the key constraints?**

Adequate funding is required to ensure that the various policy strands are capable of being delivered.

1.3	<b>Main stakeholders affected</b>
	(e.g. staff, actual or potential service users, other public sector organisations, voluntary and community groups, trade unions/professional organisations or private sector organisations)
	School pupils, parents, catering staff, teaching staff, Boards of Governors.

1.4	<b>Who is responsible for (a) devising and (b) delivering the policy ie is it DE, a Whitehall department, EU etc</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the relationship?</li> <li>• Have they considered this issue any equality issues?</li> </ul>

The policy has been devised jointly by the Department of Education (DE) and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) who are responsible for implementing it in conjunction with their associated NDPBs and school authorities etc. Aspects of equality have been taken into consideration when devising the policy.

1.5	<b>Other policies/decisions with a bearing on this policy/decision</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what are they?</li> <li>• who owns them?</li> <li>• Are there any linkages to other NI departments/NDPBs</li> </ul>

DHSSPS Investing for Health Strategy

DHSSPS Fit Futures Implementation Plan

DE Policy on New Nutritional Standards for School Lunches and Other Food in Schools

DE Proposed Healthy Schools Policy

**(2) SCREENING THE POLICY/DECISION**

- 2.1 In terms of groupings under Section 75, what is the make up of those affected by the policy/decision?

Group	Please provide details
Gender	Male and female school children
Age	Children under 18; People aged between 18-65
Religion	All
Political Opinion	All
Marital Status	All
Dependent Status	Persons with primary responsibility for the care of a child and/or a person with a disability
Disability	Children with a disability
Ethnicity	All
Sexual Orientation	All

2.2 Is there any indication or evidence of higher or lower participation or uptake by different groups?

Group	Yes/No Don't Know	Please Provide Details
Gender	No	
Age	Yes	Anecdotal evidence would suggest that as pupils get older they tend to seek alternative outlets to the school meals service eg packed lunches, outside caterers etc.
Religion	Yes	Evidence from the annual School Meals Census and the 2002/03 Family Resources Survey indicates that there are a higher proportion of eligible Protestants who do not apply for free school meals than eligible Catholics. This is being addressed by the Department of Education through the Education and Library Boards (ELBs) who are taking steps to encourage those who are entitled to free meals to take up their entitlement. Some religious groups with different dietary requirements may not perceive that the school meals service caters for their needs.
Political Opinion	No	
Marital Status	No	
Dependent Status	No	
Disability	No	
Ethnicity	Yes	Some ethnic groups with different dietary requirements may not perceive that the school meals service caters for their needs.
Sexual Orientation	No	

**2.3 Is there any indication or evidence that different groups have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the policy/decision?**

Group	Yes/No Don't Know	Please Provide Details
Gender	No	
Age	Yes	The school meals service takes account of the age of the pupil ie younger pupils require smaller portion sizes etc.
Religion	Yes	Some religions can have different dietary requirements because of specific food rules and observances but ELBs etc have confirmed they can cater for this.
Political Opinion	No	
Marital Status	No	
Dependent Status	No	
Disability	Yes	Disabled pupils often require special diets which ELBs will cater for.
Ethnicity	Yes	Some ethnic groups can have different dietary requirements because of specific food rules and observances but ELBs etc have confirmed they can cater for this.
Sexual Orientation	No	

**2.4 Is it likely that the policy/decision will meet those needs?**

Group	Yes/No Don't Know	Please Provide Details
Age	Yes	The school meals service takes account of the age of the pupil.
Religion	Yes	The school meals service caters for dietary requirements due to religious beliefs.
Disability	Yes	The school meals service caters for children with special diets.
Ethnicity	Yes	The school meals service caters for the dietary requirements of ethnic minorities.

**2.5 What other feedback, complaints, statistics, surveys, research reports, previous consultations or additional information is available to assess and screen the impact of this policy/function.**

Information relating to the uptake of school meals is available from the annual School Meals Census and other statistical returns provided by the ELBs and other school authorities. In addition, the Education and Training Inspectorate provide feedback on the results of its inspections of schools' general approaches to promoting healthy eating.

The Department consulted on the introduction of nutritional standards for school meals in 2001/02 and again in 2006 with the latter extending the initiative to cover other food in schools.

The responses to both consultations were generally positive with widespread support for the introduction of the standards. The main issues raised were in relation to the employment of catering staff in the event of a reduction in meal numbers and funding to support the initiative. The income generated for schools by tuck shops and vending machines was also highlighted.

- 2.6 Is there an opportunity to better promote equality of opportunity or good relations by altering the policy/decision or working with others in government or in the larger community?

Group	Suggestions
N/A	
N.B. <i>continue as appropriate</i>	

- 2.7 What changes to the policy/decision – if any – or what additional measures would you suggest to ensure that it promotes good relations?

Group	Suggestions
Religion	The Food in Schools policy is intended to be inclusive and should therefore support and promote good relations.
Political Opinion	The Food in Schools policy is intended to be inclusive and should therefore support and promote good relations.
Ethnicity	The Food in Schools policy is intended to be inclusive and should therefore support and promote good relations.

- 2.8 Is there any evidence or have previous consultations with relevant groups, organisations or individuals indicated that particular policies create problems that are specific to them?**

Gender – Unions have indicated that cut backs in the school meals service would have an adverse impact on the employment of women as most catering staff are female. DE has taken this into account by adopting a phased, measured, approach to the introduction of the new nutritional standards to allow pupils to adapt and so reduce the potential for a downturn in uptake.

Age – Some respondents to the Department's consultation on the introduction of new nutritional standards for school meals indicated that senior pupils should be able to make their own decisions regarding healthy choices as part of the maturing process rather than have the same restrictions placed on them as younger children. DE does not consider it would be right to apply such a "dispensation" to the issue of food in schools as senior pupils have a positive role to play by setting an example to younger pupils.

- 2.9 Please detail what data you will collect in the future in order to monitor the effect of the policy/decision on any of the groups under Section 75?**

Information relating to the uptake of school meals is collected through the annual School Meals Census and other statistical returns provided by the ELBs and other school authorities. In addition, the Education and Training Inspectorate provide feedback on the results of its inspections of schools' general approaches to promoting healthy eating.

**(3) SHOULD THE POLICY/DECISION BE SUBJECT TO EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT?**

Equality impact assessment procedures are confined to those policies/decisions considered likely to have significant/major implications for equality of opportunity.

If your screening has indicated that a policy/decision is likely to have an adverse differential impact, how would you categorise it?

Please tick.

Significant/major impact	
Low impact	✓

Do you consider that this policy/decision needs to be subjected to a full equality impact assessment?

Yes	
No	✓

Please give reasons for your decision.

The Food in Schools policy should have a positive impact on food nutritional standards. It will ensure that all relevant organisations including Government Departments, NDPBs and schools etc are aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to food in schools and that plans are in place to deliver improved nutrition for our school children.

**(4) DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION**

- 4.1 Does the policy/decision in any way discourage disabled people from participating in public life or does it fail to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?

No

- 4.2 Is there an opportunity to better promote positive attitudes towards disabled people or encourage their participation in public life by making changes to the policy/decision or introducing additional measures?

No

- 4.3 Please detail what data you will collect in the future in order to monitor the effect of the policy/decision with reference to the disability duties?

Information on pupils with disabilities is collected as part of the annual School Meals Census. In addition, the Education and Training Inspectorate provide feedback on the results of its inspections of schools' general approaches to promoting healthy eating.

## (5) CONSIDERATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

- 5.1 Does the policy/decision affect anyone's Human Rights? [PLEASE COMPLETE THE TABLE BELOW]

ARTICLE	POSITIVE IMPACT	NEGATIVE IMPACT = human right interfered with or restricted	NEUTRAL IMPACT
Article 2 – Right to life			✓
Article 3 – Right to freedom from torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment			✓
Article 4 – Right to freedom from slavery, servitude & forced or compulsory labour			✓
Article 5 – Right to liberty & security of person			✓
Article 6 – Right to a fair & public trial within a reasonable time			✓
Article 7 – Right to freedom from retrospective criminal law & no punishment without law.			✓
Article 8 – Right to respect for private & family life, home and correspondence.			✓
Article 9 – Right to freedom of thought, conscience & religion			✓
Article 10 – Right to freedom of expression			✓
Article 11 – Right to freedom of assembly & association			✓
Article 12 – Right to marry & found a family			✓
Article 14 – Prohibition of discrimination in the enjoyment of the convention rights			✓
1st protocol Article 1 – Right to a peaceful enjoyment of possessions & protection of property			✓
1st protocol Article 2 – Right of access to education			✓

If the effect you have identified is positive or neutral please move on to Question 5.3.

**5.2 If you have identified a likely negative impact who is affected and how?**

At this stage we would recommend that you consult with your line manager to determine whether to seek legal advice and to refer to Equality Guidance and Co-ordination Unit to consider:

- whether there is a law which allows you to interfere with or restrict rights
- whether this interference or restriction is necessary and proportionate
- what action would be required to reduce the level of interference or restriction in order to comply with the Human Rights Act (1998).

**5.3 Outline any actions which could be taken to promote or raise awareness of human rights or to ensure compliance with the legislation in relation to the policy/decision.**

The Food in Schools policy should have a neutral impact on human rights. A healthy, balanced diet is vital for children's growth and development, and for their long term health and well being. The policy will contribute to achieving this goal.

Research also shows that children from disadvantaged backgrounds tend to eat more of foods that are high in fat, salt and sugar and less fruit and vegetables than children from more affluent families. The policy will ensure that Education and Library Boards and schools continue to encourage those who are entitled to free school meals to avail of this entitlement.

Policy/Decision Screened by\*: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Head of Branch)*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**FOR COMPLETION BY  
EQUALITY GUIDANCE AND CO-ORDINATION UNIT**

Quality Assured by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Screening Out Agreed / Screening Out Not Agreed

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date Division/Branch Informed: \_\_\_\_\_

**If Screened Out:**

Start of Consultation: \_\_\_\_\_ End of Consultation: \* \_\_\_\_\_

Placed on Internet by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**If Screened In:**

Date EQIA issued: \_\_\_\_\_

\* The consultation period must be a minimum of 8/12 weeks.

Main Groups Relevant to the Section 75 Categories	
Category	Main Groups
Religious belief	Protestant; Catholics; people of non-Christian faiths; people of no religious belief
Political opinion	Unionists generally; Nationalists generally; members/supporters of any political party
Racial Group	White people, Chinese; Irish Travellers; Indians; Pakistanis; Bangladeshis; Black Africans; Black Caribbean people; people with mixed ethnic group
"Men and women generally"	Men (including boys); women (including girls); trans-gendered people
Marital status	Married people; unmarried people; divorced or separated people; widowed people
Age	For most purposes, the main categories are: children under 18, people aged between 18-65, and people over 65. However, the definition of age groups will need to be sensitive to the policy under consideration
"Persons with a disability"	Disability is defined as: A physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities as defined in Sections 1 and 2 and Schedules 1 and 2 of the Disability Discriminations Act 1995
"Persons with dependants"	Persons with personal responsibility for the care of a child; persons with personal responsibility for the care of a person
Sexual orientation	Heterosexuals; bi-sexuals; gays; lesbians

Please forward a copy of the completed Screening Form to:-

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**Equality and Human Rights  
Screening Template**

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