

# Better Eating, Better Learning

Self-Evaluation Tool

The Scottish Government, Edinburgh 2014

Version 1 - March 2014

## Purpose

The key message for all staff involved in schools is to recognise the contribution school food and drink makes to delivering a better Scotland. The context of school food and drink presents many opportunities for the school food service to enrich learning.

The tool should support partners to collectively review what has been achieved and to jointly agree what needs to be done next for further improvement. It is likely that the tool will be completed by schools, local authorities and caterers, following discussion with and input from others, and expected that the findings of the self-evaluation will be fed into school improvement plans.

All sections are relevant to all colleagues but do not necessarily apply equally to all. What is important is that school food is viewed in the context of health, education and as a central part of a whole school approach. This tool also provides the opportunity to review school food and drink provision and food education to consider how it can help address inequalities that exist and help foster good relations with disadvantaged groups.

This self-evaluation tool will be reviewed periodically and updated in response to feedback. The tool can be accessed, and completed, online at [www.scotland.gov.uk/bettereatingtool](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/bettereatingtool)

When using the tool to review practice and prioritise action, remember the vision set out in the foreword to Better Eating, Better Learning – A New Context for School Food, which advocates:

- using school food as part of a whole school approach to support learning as an integral part of the curriculum;
- serving school food that drives dietary behaviour change and supports our health and environmental goals;
- championing fresh, seasonal, local and sustainable produce;
- celebrating provenance and ethical sourcing;
- inspiring future generations who are proud of, and contribute to, Scotland’s ambition as the ‘Land of Food and Drink’;
- ensuring that school food provides affordable access to good nutrition for all children and young people and optimising the uptake of school meals, in particular for those children and young people receiving free meals; and
- supporting children and young people, their parents, teaching and catering staff, to enjoy and value school food for its quality, provenance and appeal and in doing so to enable them to understand the relationship between school food, culture, health and the environment.

## FOOD AND HEALTH

**THE CHALLENGE:** To use school food and drink and food education to drive dietary change and therefore improve the diets of children and young people. To ensure that school food is an exemplar for healthy eating, and that food education supports children and young people to make the right food choices.

|  | WHERE WE ARE NOW | ACTION PLAN |
|--|------------------|-------------|
| What steps have you taken to ensure a whole school approach to plan for improvements in food and health?   |                  |             |
| What training is in place to support all staff's understanding of relevant aspects of food and health, including the requirements of the Health Promotion and Nutrition Act? |                  |             |
| What steps have you taken to encourage children and young people to try more healthy, fresh and in-season foods, in and out of school?                                       |                  |             |
| How does food education and school food provision drive dietary change through influencing the food choices made by children and young people?                               |                  |             |
| How is responsibility and accountability for food and health in school shared between relevant parties?  |                  |             |

## FOOD AND LEARNING

**THE CHALLENGE:** To develop the breadth and depth of children and young people’s knowledge, skills and attitudes related to food: where it comes from; how it is produced; what influences food choices and preferences; and the impact that food has on health and wellbeing and the environment.

|   | WHERE WE ARE NOW | ACTION PLAN |
|---|------------------|-------------|
| How do learning experiences offer children and young people exciting and challenging opportunities for them to explore current food and health issues which interest them?                      |                  |             |
| To what extent are school food and food education used to develop the breadth and depth of knowledge, skills and attitudes to food, including the impact of food on health and the environment? |                  |             |
| How do you make use of the dining experience as a context for learning?   |                  |             |
| How do you capitalise on the expertise of catering staff and the availability of catering facilities to support food education?   |                  |             |
| How do you work with partners, children and young people, families and the school’s community to enrich learning around food and maximise opportunities for learning?                           |                  |             |
| Who is involved in planning, delivering and evaluating the impact of food education in your school or centre?   |                  |             |

## SCHOOL FOOD AND DRINK PROVISION

**THE CHALLENGE:** To ensure that everyone involved in school food provision understands the need for inspiring menus which take into account nutrition, health and environmental impacts. School food and drink provision should reinforce children and young people's learning, enabling them to make good food choices that will continue into adulthood.

|   | WHERE WE ARE NOW | ACTION PLAN |
|---|------------------|-------------|
| How do you ensure that food and menus appeal to children and young people but also meet the nutritional standards and health and environmental goals? |                  |             |
| How are the dietary needs of all met? For example, religious, cultural and medical needs.   |                  |             |
| What steps do you take to ensure that 'supply meets demand' as far as practically possible and food waste is minimised?                               |                  |             |
| How well do school-based and school-operated food activities demonstrate health promotion in line with the Schools Health Promotion Act?              |                  |             |
| How do the school and caterers work together to improve school food provision, including seeking feedback on current practices?                       |                  |             |
| What steps do you take to influence food brought into schools, and to promote school food as an attractive lunch option?                              |                  |             |

## THE DINING EXPERIENCE

**THE CHALLENGE:** To create an experience that encourages positive social interaction in an environment that children and young people choose to use, enjoy and look forward to.

|  | WHERE WE ARE NOW | ACTION PLAN |
|--|------------------|-------------|
| How well does the physical environment of the dining area meet the needs of all children and young people (including those with additional support needs)? |                  |             |
| How does the school ensure that the dining area provides a positive, inclusive social environment for all?   |                  |             |
| What steps are taken to ensure that management of the dining experience is effectively monitored and encourages use of the school food service?            |                  |             |
| What accountability is placed on young people to use the dining hall responsibly?  |                  |             |
| What impact do payment systems have on the dining experience?  |                  |             |
| How do you gather and use feedback on the dining experience?   |                  |             |

## SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH FOOD

**THE CHALLENGE:** To find practical ways to supply the school meal service with healthy, fresh, seasonal, and sustainably grown food. To use school food as an entry point for young people to learn about the impact of food choices on individual health and the environment, and to understand their role in the conservation of natural resources, food waste and recycling.

|   | WHERE WE ARE NOW | ACTION PLAN |
|---|------------------|-------------|
| How well does food provision throughout the school reflect the aims of sustainability?  |                  |             |
| How does the procurement of food reflect the Sustainable Food Procurement Checklist* in 'Catering for Change', for example, do menus use food that is fresh, sustainable (e.g. free range eggs), and locally in-season? |                  |             |
| To what extent is sustainability taken into account, for example through waste and energy management, within kitchen and dining area practices (such as recycling)?   |                  |             |
| How is school food used to provide experiential learning for children and young people around sustainability?   |                  |             |
| How effectively does the school promote the social, educational and nutritional benefits of school food across the school and school community?   |                  |             |

\*Catering for Change - Sustainable Food Procurement Checklist <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/01/12154555/6>

## TRAINING AND SUPPORT

**THE CHALLENGE:** To provide all teaching and catering staff involved in school food provision and food education with the support and opportunity to undertake professional training which enables and motivates them to maximise opportunities to teach children and young people about the relationship between food, health, and the environment.

|   | WHERE WE ARE NOW | ACTION PLAN |
|---|------------------|-------------|
| How well do school and catering staff understand the new, wider context for school food, and their role in delivering school, local and national objectives?  |                  |             |
| How are Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities planned to best meet the needs of staff in designing and delivering food-related experiences? |                  |             |
| Does Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for catering staff include training/support around Food and Health as part of essential employee development?  |                  |             |
| To what extent do catering staff and teachers understand and utilise the knowledge and skills each brings to food education?                                  |                  |             |
| To what extent are school and catering staff supported to ensure they have a shared understanding of the relationship between food and health?                |                  |             |
| How well does the school work with the wider community and other partners to share expertise and skills, and build capacity through networks of support?      |                  |             |

## COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

**THE CHALLENGE:** For schools and local authorities to successfully promote exemplar school food provision and food education to all of their stakeholders. To promote the benefits of healthy choices to encourage support from parents, carers, children and young people, teachers, caterers, health professionals and other stakeholders.

|  | WHERE WE ARE NOW | ACTION PLAN |
|--|------------------|-------------|
| How do you ensure that everyone understands this new, wider context for school food?   |                  |             |
| How is information about food provision and food education shared with parents?  |                  |             |
| What opportunities are there for <b>all</b> partners, including children and young people, to <b>contribute</b> to discussions around improvements in food provision and education?      |                  |             |
| What steps do you take to ensure that the school meal service is effectively <b>promoted</b> to children, young people and parents?  |                  |             |
| How are teachers, catering staff and others involved in promoting the value of both school food and food education, for example at parent evenings, community outreach and other events? |                  |             |





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