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[Department
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Guidance

Breakfast clubs early adopter guidance for schools and trusts in England

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Applies to England

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Overview

The government is committed to offering a free breakfast club in every state-funded school with primary aged pupils in England (the new breakfast club offer). Breakfast clubs are designed to break down barriers to opportunity, as well as tackle the impact of child poverty.

Free universal breakfast clubs give children a supportive start to the school day, ensuring they are ready to learn and make the most of the opportunities schools offer.

Schools that offer breakfast clubs report [improvements in behaviour, attendance, and academic attainment](#).

These are benefits that support children to achieve and thrive, while supporting teachers and school staff in their work.

Breakfast clubs also support families financially by [reducing the costs of living](#).

There is more information available on [a head teachers' view on the benefits of breakfast clubs](#).

Goals of the programme

The goal of breakfast clubs is for every school, child, and family to have the opportunity to experience these benefits. To achieve this, we are:

- including clauses in the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill that will place a duty on all state funded primary schools to secure a free breakfast club subject to the will of Parliament
- working with up to 750 early adopter schools from 2025 to 2026 to test and learn how best to implement the new breakfast clubs ahead of national rollout

During this test and learn phase, we also want to learn what's already being done by:

- schools

- local authorities
- private, voluntary and independent (PVI) providers including childminders
- national and local charities

The new breakfast club offer should build on existing school provision and work seamlessly in contributing to the full wraparound childcare offer.

The national wraparound childcare programme continues to run alongside our early adopter scheme for breakfast clubs. We are continuing to support schools on the existing national school breakfast programme to ensure continuity of provision.

The early adopters scheme

Early adopter schools have an opportunity to inform the roll-out of breakfast clubs on a national scale and bring the new breakfast club programme to their schools early, supporting them to secure the best results for their pupils and families.

Schools that become early adopters will get early access to government funding to deliver free and universal breakfast clubs from first day of summer term 2025.

Early adopter schools will work with Department for Education (DfE) to shape the national programme and ensure that the pupils in their school are offered a soft start to school every day.

Schools have been selected to ensure a wide range of representation across different school types, sizes and geographical areas including schools that work with PVI providers.

By taking part schools are supporting us to:

- understand how schools design and implement their offer at a local level
- identify any barriers to implementation, delivery challenges, and what works to overcome these
- better understand parental demand and pupil take-up over time
- better understand the roles local authorities, childcare providers, businesses, and charities can play in supporting schools to deliver

Early adopter schools also have flexibility in how they deliver their breakfast club in a way that works for them and will receive support to help them do so.

New breakfast clubs should fit with the wider wraparound offer in a school. For example, if a school or PVI currently delivers before school childcare for a school from 8am until school starts at 9am, this should continue.

Schools will decide how best to run the new free and universal minimum expectations within or alongside this provision. Parents and carers should pay a lower cost for this provision to incorporate the 30 minutes government-funded element.

Schools and PVIs should ensure that families can also choose to access the 30 minute free breakfast club without having to attend any longer paid for provision.

Some schools may continue to provide additional offers beyond the breakfast club funded offer. This may be because children and families need alternative approaches to meet their needs. This could include free childcare beyond the 30 minutes, or a food only offer for those children that do not access the club element.

These additional offers will not be funded through the DfE breakfast clubs programme, but schools can make their own decisions about how they are delivered and make appropriate charges to parents and carers.

Who this guidance is for

This guidance is for early adopter schools and trusts, specifically:

- school and trust leaders
- special and alternative provision schools
- operational leads in schools
- governing boards in maintained schools
- academy trust boards and local governing bodies

It may also be of interest to:

- local authorities who have an interest in how breakfast clubs can support their existing duty to ensure sufficient childcare places in their local area
- PVIs, including childminders, who are well placed to partner with schools to deliver the breakfast clubs programme ambition

Minimum expectations on schools and trusts

The minimum expectations on schools are detailed below and should include:

- having a breakfast club on the school site or in the vicinity
- enabling pupils to get a soft start with a seamless transfer into the school day
- being universal and free to parents and carers
- being at least 30 minutes in duration, immediately before the start of the compulsory school day
- that the breakfast being provided adheres to the [school food standards for England](#)

Early adopter schools must meet these minimum expectations from the first day of Summer Term 2025. This includes offering a place at their breakfast club to all pupils who want one. Schools cannot limit the number of places available.

Schools have flexibility in how they deliver their breakfast club to meet these expectations and will receive a package of support to help them do so. Any school that is concerned about their ability to meet the minimum expectations should contact DfE for additional support.

The club should be embedded into the school or trust's wider improvement strategy to ensure those academic benefits are being maximised across the school day.

The new breakfast clubs should help to ensure that children most in need are able to experience the benefits of attending the club.

Creating inclusive provision

Schools should make breakfast clubs inclusive and accessible for all children. This includes children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and children considered vulnerable.

When deciding how to deliver breakfast clubs schools should consider the individual needs of children at their school who will be accessing the provision.

Under the Equality Act 2010, schools must make reasonable adjustments for

children with disabilities. If a child with disabilities needs a reasonable adjustment to attend the breakfast club, the school must pay for it, not parents and carers.

When deciding whether an adjustment is reasonable, you should consider:

- whether the adjustment is essential in enabling a child equal access to the same provision as their peers
- its practicality
- the affordability of any one-off or ongoing costs

To make sure the breakfast club programme is inclusive, you should consider:

- having an appropriate offer for children with SEND
- making sure all staff are appropriately trained to deliver high quality, accessible and inclusive provision
- ensuring the arrangements for breakfast clubs are suitable and safe where children have specific support needs (for example specified in an education, health and care plan)
- providing food choices that take account of cultural, religious, and specific dietary needs
- having a plan to ensure you can identify the needs of children with SEND
- speaking to families regularly to understand individual needs and how these may change
- what transport arrangements may be necessary

When working with other providers, schools should consider whether the club is inclusive and appropriate for the needs of the children at your school.

DfE will work with mainstream schools, special schools and alternative provision through the early adopter test and learn phase to develop specific guidance for creating an inclusive breakfast club programme and supporting children with SEND to access breakfast clubs.

Staffing and delivery considerations for breakfast clubs

School leaders should identify the breakfast club staffing model that best aligns with the needs of children and staff. For some schools, this could be an expansion of

pre-existing provision.

Breakfast clubs can be led by various individuals, including:

- teachers
- teaching assistants
- school catering staff
- volunteers
- others specifically hired to deliver the role

Schools may choose to appoint a PVI provider to manage the club, including food provision, on their behalf. Alternatively, a hybrid model may facilitate the additional capacity required to deliver provision to more children.

Breakfast club leaders should use their judgement to identify the most appropriate people to deliver breakfast clubs, depending on:

- the school's context
- the existing staff contracts and arrangements
- the mix of skills and experience required
- the overall workload for groups of staff

Schools should also ensure that staff caring for children with SEND are appropriately trained.

DfE has published the [teacher recruitment and retention strategy](#), designed for local authorities and all types of wraparound providers to support recruitment and retainment.

Schools should:

- consider whether they work with other organisations to run their provision, including PVI providers and childminders, who may be able to work on non-domestic premises
- consider whether they use supply staff or temporary workers to help run their breakfast club programme where needed
- exercise financial prudence when taking on additional staff and seek the best rates available
- consider compressed hours or flexible working for existing staff members
- consider using the DfE and Crown Commercial Service agency supply deal if hiring agency workers

- consider whether the [school resource management adviser \(SRMA\) programme](#) can support delivery of the breakfast club programme

DfE has introduced an [education staff wellbeing charter](#), a formal declaration of its commitment to supporting the wellbeing and mental health of everyone working in the education sector.

You can find more information about the benefits of breakfast clubs in the [KOOSA Kids breakfast club at Hook Infant School case study](#).

Staff ratios

The staff to child ratios are dependent on the age of children and the qualification levels of staff. School leaders should determine how many staff are required to ensure the safety and welfare of children, considering:

- the types of activity
- the age and needs of the children, including SEND or medical needs
- if any children need one to one support
- safeguarding

You should also make sure you:

- have a process for staff absences to make sure they can continue to meet suitable ratios
- have enough staff to supervise children when eating or drinking
- have enough staff to support a child who is taken ill or requires medical attention

Breakfast clubs may include children who attend reception class during the school day. You should have regard for the [early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework](#) for group and school-based providers.

If a breakfast club programme is being delivered by a PVI provider, who only provides care for children 6 and above, the provider should follow the ratio requirements set out in the guidance for daycare providers on the [compulsory childcare register: Ofsted requirements](#).

Staff training and qualifications

School leaders are responsible for considering the staff qualification and training requirements if running breakfast clubs. While there are no specific staff qualification requirements for breakfast clubs for school-aged children, leaders should consider whether staff training is beneficial to ensure the needs of children attending provision are met.

Staff should be adequately trained in food hygiene. While it is not a legal requirement to hold a food hygiene certificate, training, e-learning and other formal courses can be useful to ensure that an adequate and verifiable level has been achieved by staff. See [starting your food business safely](#).

Local authority food safety teams will be able to advise on which course is most suitable: [Contact a food safety team](#). Schools may wish to consider additional training options for their staff.

Local authorities in England provide various training programmes for staff, ranging from safeguarding to playwork and the Out of School Alliance recommends a list of training providers that may be of interest.

One training option is an apprenticeship, which usually takes around 18 months to complete and is a mix of study and workplace learning. There are a range of apprenticeships that are relevant to working in breakfast clubs and childcare.

More information is available on the [Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education's website](#). Staff may also be interested in becoming a playworker.

Transport

It is the responsibility of parents and carers to drop off children to breakfast clubs or make alternative transport arrangements. As set out in the [home to school travel and transport statutory guidance](#), children will only be eligible for free home to school transport to get to school for the beginning of the school day and to return home at the end of the school day, provided they meet the eligibility criteria.

Roles and responsibilities

Role of schools and trusts

Early adopter schools are key to testing how DfE deliver the commitment for universal breakfast clubs across state funded primary schools. Schools should follow the [minimum expectations on schools and trusts](#).

The expectation remains that all schools should have 8am to 6pm paid for wraparound childcare on school site unless there is a reasonable justification not to. Schools will need to consider all support available, in particular from the national wraparound childcare programme.

Breakfast clubs should sit within, or alongside existing childcare offers which are currently available or being created through the national wraparound childcare programme.

The new breakfast clubs should help ensure that childcare is more affordable for parents and carers and should not reduce the availability or affordability of wider childcare offers or displace existing provision that is meeting the needs of children and families.

Role of local authorities

Local authorities have a statutory duty to secure, so far as reasonably practicable, enough childcare places within its area for children aged 0 to 14 (or up to 18 for disabled children) to meet demand.

Local authorities should support schools and childcare providers to ensure the availability of childcare.

Where necessary, this should include working with schools to ensure breakfast clubs do not reduce the availability of childcare for working families or displace existing provision that's meeting the needs of children and families.

Local authorities are well placed to support schools to deliver breakfast clubs through their:

- knowledge of the local childcare market
- relationships with schools and childcare providers
- continued support for schools to overcome barriers to delivering places funded through the national wraparound programme

We expect local authorities to support schools through existing offers, as far as reasonably practicable, to deliver new breakfast clubs. Examples of the support local authorities may be able to offer schools are set out in the [national wraparound childcare handbook](#).

As there will only be a small number of schools per local authority delivering as an early adopter, this will give DfE the opportunity to test what the role of the local authority will function ahead of national roll out.

Role of trustees and the governing board

The strategic oversight of a free breakfast club can be incorporated into trustees and governing board's responsibilities, and should be accessible to all alongside any existing breakfast or wraparound provision.

Governors and trustees must ensure they maintain a balance between strategic oversight and avoiding involvement in operational roles.

The governing body and academy trustees also have a responsibility to ensure compliance with the school food standards.

The governing body and trustees may wish to ask the headteacher or executive leader for evidence that the school or academy's breakfast offer is compliant with the standards.

Role of PVIs including childminders

PVIs, including childminders can offer experience and expertise in childcare and help to support with staffing.

In some cases, they can offer further services to schools, such as:

- after school provision
- lunchtime supervision
- activity and enrichment clubs
- curriculum support

DfE encourages collaborative, innovative partnership working between schools and PVI's to ensure that breakfast clubs best meet the needs of children and families who use them.

Many PVI's already deliver breakfast clubs both on-school and off-school sites and the department encourages schools to build on the existing provision that is in place to support the delivery of breakfast clubs.

If a PVI is already delivering a breakfast club that meets the needs of children and families, then schools should not displace that provision. Instead, they should aim to incorporate the universal breakfast club offer as part of the existing provision.

The number of PVI providers operating in local areas varies and schools can contact the local authority wraparound lead for information about local providers. Where they do operate, PVI providers may be able to support you to deliver your breakfast club programme by:

- creating new breakfast clubs
- scaling up your existing breakfast club offer

Collaborating with PVI's during the early adopter phase of the scheme will give DfE the opportunity to test what the role of PVI's will be ahead of national roll out.

To ensure minimum safe standards in breakfast club programmes, all PVI providers and childminders funded through the breakfast club scheme must be registered with Ofsted.

For PVI providers, the type of registration will be dependent on the age range of children attending the breakfast club. For childminders, registration must be with Ofsted or a childminder agency.

Further information about the different registration requirements PVI providers and childminders must follow can be found in the [designing breakfast clubs](#) section of this guidance.

DfE introduced changes in November 2024 to enable childcare providers to spend more of their time on non-domestic premises. Local authorities should inform schools about working with local childminders without domestic premises, and domestic providers approved to work from non-domestic sites and how they can support with breakfast club programmes.

Support for schools and trusts

DfE is working closely with both the food and PVI sectors to explore delivery models and support available to schools. This section of guidance describes the types of support that will be available to help schools meet expectations.

Support for early adopters will be in place throughout the scheme to ensure that schools are set up for success and have confidence to deliver. They will receive support through existing infrastructure and additional targeted support where required.

Our planned offer for early adopters reflects feedback from schools through roundtables held in autumn 2024. The department will hear feedback from the early adopter schools to build our knowledge and evidence of what support schools need. We will develop the offer ahead of the national roll out of universal breakfast clubs.

Local support

Local authorities have existing support offers for schools and childcare providers to secure sufficient childcare for their local area. Early adopters should work collaboratively with their local authority, in line with the expectations on wraparound childcare.

Early adopters are:

- encouraged to contact their local authority wraparound lead to explore what support their local authority can offer to help establish or adapt their breakfast club programme to meet expectations
- expected to work with their local authority to ensure breakfast clubs do not reduce the availability of childcare for working families or displace existing provision
- expected to support their local authority to understand demand for childcare, and the childcare available at your school

Examples of the support local authorities may be able to offer include:

- supporting the development of delivery models which build upon and complement existing local provision and address delivery barriers
- meeting the needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), vulnerable and disadvantaged children

- developing partnerships across schools, trusts and PVI providers
- providing business support
- planning for delivery, including workforce considerations, advising on safeguarding, Ofsted and quality of provision
- coordinating or arranging staff training
- supporting schools to improve attendance and tackle poverty including supporting healthy eating and obesity

To ensure schools and providers are able to deliver the minimum expectations we will provide additional support, beyond what is available locally, to early adopters via the department's [customer help portal](#).

National support

Further to support that might be provided locally, you can access:

- self-service support for all schools to understand breakfast club expectations, funding, and access practical tools to support delivery
- advice and troubleshooting for schools to seek advice and support from DfE or the support contractor where this is not available through the self-service offer, and work with other early adopters to identify solutions to challenges
- bespoke support for schools with specific support needs not addressed through other channels to access in-depth specialist advice

Self-service support

Beyond the information outlined in this guidance, we will provide a toolkit of support aimed at schools called the breakfast club blueprint. The blueprint will provide:

- templates
- guidance
- signposting to existing resources
- case studies at each stage of a school's journey from preparing for, to implementing the policy

We will continue to add to, test and refine the toolkit as early adopters begin

implementation by collecting school's feedback and learning about best practice.

Procurement support

The [buying for schools service](#) includes a team of procurement specialists that offer free support for schools in buying goods or services. The service aims to support schools and trusts to buy goods and services compliantly and have peace of mind they are getting good value in terms of cost, quality and time.

Get help for schools' team of specialists can:

- offer advice and guidance to make sure schools are buying compliantly at any point, even if the procurement process is already in progress
- review documents to make sure they are complete and compliant, including advice on specification documents, tender documents and evaluation criteria
- support on choosing or using a framework agreement for procurement
- advise when schools need to seek legal advice

Advice and troubleshooting

If the self-service support offer does not address your needs, you can seek further help through:

- the customer help portal
- the school peer-to-peer support network

All early adopters will be assigned to a breakfast club peer-to-peer network from February 2025 to share problem-solving approaches and facilitate learning.

Bespoke support

For some schools, substantial delivery challenges may not be addressed by the self-service or targeted support offers, and local support offer may not be able to address these challenges. Bespoke support will support early adopters in these

cases.

Early adopters will have access to a pool of expert advisors with varied expertise to support breakfast club delivery. This includes:

- answering queries
- conducting school visits
- support with training

DfE will share a separate guide on how to access support from expert advisors and take part in school peer to peer networks successfully.

Designing breakfast clubs

This section of guidance will help schools understand how to deliver breakfast clubs that meet the needs of children as well as their families from the start of the early adopter scheme.

Aims and principles in creating your club

Beyond the minimum expectations of early adopter schools, we want to give schools flexibility over how they design their new breakfast clubs. Schools know their pupils, and local communities, and are best placed to decide how to deliver a breakfast club considering their school's existing provision and cohort of pupils.

To create clubs that pupils want to attend, schools will want to consider:

- the types of food to offer
- the environment the club is hosted in
- the activities available to children
- space for them to use
- who the staff are who are looking after them

Many schools who successfully run breakfast clubs link activities with areas of educational focus for the school.

Breakfast clubs should support pupils being ready to learn with a seamless transition into the school day and schools should consider how they can support this.

Schools should continue with existing wider childcare offers already in place or consider how a funded breakfast club can sit within a wider offer that would benefit their pupils and families.

The [national wraparound childcare programme handbook](#) sets out principles for schools to consider when deciding how to deliver before and after school childcare.

When to register with Ofsted

Breakfast club provided directly by the school

As a school, you will not need to register your breakfast club programme with Ofsted if:

- you are offering it directly as part of your school's activities
- you employ the staff working in the breakfast club
- there is at least one registered pupil of the school attending

In this scenario, the breakfast club will fall under the Ofsted education inspection framework and Ofsted may observe pupils at the breakfast club as part of the school inspection.

Breakfast clubs delivered directly by a school must still meet the requirements set out in Ofsted's general childcare register, regardless of whether the school has to register with Ofsted.

More information about the requirements for schools providing childcare, including breakfast clubs, and when registration is and is not required, can be found in the [registering school-based childcare provision](#) guidance.

Breakfast club provided by a PVI or childminder

To ensure minimum safe standards are in place, the PVI provider or childminder must be registered with Ofsted as part of the grant conditions of the early adopter scheme.

For PVI providers, the type of registration will be dependent on the age range of children attending the breakfast club. For childminders, registration must be with Ofsted or a childminder agency.

Details of which registration process to follow for PVI providers and childminders can be found here in the [childminders and childcare providers: register with Ofsted](#) guidance.

If you are working with a PVI provider or childminder, you should:

- check providers have appropriate registrations in place
- ensure providers you work with are following the requirements of the early years statutory framework or childcare register, dependant on the age of the children being cared for

If you have concerns about a PVI provider or childminder not meeting Ofsted standards, as set out in EYFS or the childcare register, contact your local authority or Ofsted directly. Ofsted inform local authorities of all Ofsted inspection grades.

Delivering breakfast clubs

When considering pupil need, flexibility will be given to schools in how schools set up and run their breakfast club. Schools may choose to deliver the breakfast club in-house or outsource to a PVI to lead delivery on their behalf on or off the school site.

Delivering in house

Many schools choose to deliver breakfast clubs and wider wraparound childcare directly. Staff may be existing school staff or staff recruited specifically for provision. Benefits of this model can be:

- maintaining high levels of control on every aspect of provision, including activities offered

- continuing existing relationships between school staff and children
- breakfast club complementing wider school and extracurricular activities

There is more information available in the [In-class breakfast stations at Arboretum Primary School case study](#).

Working with PVI including childminders

Some schools may want to work in partnership with local PVI providers including childminders. Working with PVI can support schools by:

- reducing the administrative/resource burden on schools
- using PVI that have expertise in childcare
- enabling access to further childcare such as after school provision and holiday childcare
- gaining additional services through the PVI, such as lunchtime supervision, sports training and enrichment clubs

Schools can set up contracts or service level agreements with PVI providers to deliver breakfast club programmes. Agreements on what the school and the provider expect from the arrangement should be established. It's important that all parties understand and agree terms and responsibilities when working together.

PVI may operate from on a school site or off a school site, for example at a local community centre.

There is more information available in the [PVI partnership at Paxton Primary School case study](#).

Off school site provision

If a school faces challenges running the breakfast club on its own site, it can partner with other nearby schools working with a PVI to deliver the breakfast club from a different location.

Benefits of this model can be:

- support for schools that do not have sufficient workforce to run standalone provision
- support for schools that do not have sufficient space to run provision alone
- sharing best practice with nearby schools
- providing opportunities for pupils to socialise with pupils of nearby school and increase confidence

When running a club in partnership with another school, schools will need to ensure the minimum expectations are met as well as complying with any other existing statutory guidance, non-statutory guidance and statutory obligations.

For any off-site provision, schools will want to reflect on:

- ensuring the school or space is in close proximity to the school
- ensuring pupils are safely escorted from the nearby school or site to the school in a timely manner
- ensuring the nearby school or off-site space meets all the needs of the breakfast club
- ensuring this model remains convenient for parents and carers

Schools should seek advice from their LA if they would like to create a partnership model with other schools or to find a PVI provider who can deliver the breakfast club programme.

Safeguarding and health & safety

Schools should pay regard to the safeguarding and health and safety section of [wraparound childcare: guidance for schools and trusts in England](#).

Schools in England must have regard to the statutory guidance [keeping children safe in education](#) when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Breakfast clubs may include children who attend reception class during the school day. You should have regard for the safeguarding and welfare requirements as set out in section 3 of the early years foundation stage [EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers](#).

From September 2025 the EYFS will include requirements on safer eating including:

- ensuring there is someone with a valid paediatric first aid certificate in the room when children are eating
- ensuring awareness of how to prepare food for children to prevent choking
- requirements around understanding and managing allergies

Schools should:

- make sure all staff receive safeguarding training and that they know the identity of the designated safeguarding lead (or deputies) and how to contact them
- make sure all staff, including volunteers, have obtained an enhanced disclosure and barring service (DBS) check

PVI providers and childminders funded through the early adopter scheme must be registered with Ofsted. As such, they will also be subject to the safeguarding and health and safety requirements set out in the [EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers](#) and on the childcare register for [childminders and childcare providers](#), subject to the age range of children being cared for.

Premises considerations

Schools have the flexibility to decide how and where to deliver their breakfast club programme, in accordance with the [minimum requirements](#).

Schools have the option to provide breakfast clubs on-site, utilising one or more existing spaces within their estates such as:

- assembly halls
- classrooms
- non-teaching areas

Alternatively they can opt to offer the provision off-site at a nearby venue.

For onsite provision, DfE recognises that schools face competing demands on the use of their estate and that school leaders already purposefully maximise the use of their spaces. It is anticipated that breakfast clubs can be delivered within the school's existing spaces given their early start time before the lessons begin.

Schools will need to assess their overall breakfast club offer, assess any potential constraints and explore opportunities to make the best use of available facilities in

ways that could provide broader benefits to the school.

In some cases, schools may find it necessary to invest in additional facilities. They can utilise the one-off start-up grant to cover the revenue cost of:

- equipment
- materials
- training
- infrastructure and systems

For more information, please refer to the grant details in the [funding](#) section.

Schools will need to decide if the breakfast club will be managed by the school or run by a third-party PVI provider. Schools will need to determine whether there are any associated safeguarding or management requirements that may affect access or space zoning arrangements. Some of the aspects to consider include:

- managing hygiene standards
- access to toilets
- food deliveries
- waste management
- furniture set up and arrangement
- adult supervision
- SEND requirements
- staff facilities
- timetabling
- set-up timings
- sign up and GDPR

The starting point should be to design the breakfast club offer and delivery model using the designing your breakfast club section.

Determine expected demand and uptake using the [funding](#) section and decide how, when and who will run it.

This will help to determine how the breakfast club can be best accommodated and if there are any changes needed.

Schools must meet all statutory requirements including:

- those in the [keeping children safe in education 2024](#) and [working together to safeguard children](#) pages
- early years foundation stage (EYFS) including space requirements
- the compulsory part of the general childcare register requirements
- health and safety in the workplace
- fire safety
- environmental building and grounds

Delivering a high quality food offer

Having a healthy breakfast can help children get the energy they need to start the school day. We know that many schools already offer breakfast provision and that pupils enjoy eating with their peers before the school day begins.

Food served at breakfast will need to be compliant with the [school food standards practical guide](#).

These food-based standards specify which types of food should be served at school and how often. The [school food standards: resources for schools](#) page contains a helpful checklist for school food other than at lunch which sets out what should and should not be served across the school day, including at breakfast clubs.

Head teachers and school leaders will be well-versed on how to apply the standards to ensure children have a healthy lunch whilst at school. For the breakfast offer, there are plenty of tips and advice on how to provide a healthy breakfast within the existing guidance.

It's important to provide a wide range of foods across the week, ensuring foods are low in saturated fat, sugar and high in fibre to:

- ensure that food provided to children in school is nutritious and of high quality
- promote good nutritional health in all pupils
- support those who are nutritionally vulnerable
- promote good eating behaviour

There is more information available in the [Breakfast Bistro at Carr Mill Primary School case study](#).

Breakfast examples

Below are some breakfast ideas so that schools can provide a healthy, varied and nutritious breakfast for their pupils.

Starchy carbohydrates

These are recommended to form the basis of the breakfast offer. Try to offer a variety across the week. Examples include:

- wheat bisks
- shredded wholewheat
- unsweetened puffed wheat
- no added sugar muesli
- plain porridge
- corn flakes
- rice pops
- higher fibre bread such as wholemeal and higher fibre white breads, fruit breads, hot cross buns and crumpets

Low sugar, higher fibre cereals

Choose breakfast cereals with the lowest sugar content which are labelled as low (green on the front of pack nutrition label) in total sugar. No added sugar mueslis won't be green on the label because of the dried fruit, but these are still good to serve.

Fruit and vegetables

Fruit and vegetables should be made available as part of the breakfast offer. These can be included in a variety of ways including:

- fresh
- dried fruit or canned
- in juice (not syrup) served with cereal
- bread or yoghurt
- cooked mushrooms
- tomatoes or baked beans (reduced sugar and salt) if you opt for a hot breakfast offer

Aim to offer a variety of fruit or vegetables across the week.

Lower fat and lower sugar dairy or alternatives

Dairy foods can be served. This could be:

- a glass of semi-skimmed milk
- milk provided for cereal
- lower fat no added sugar yoghurt

Fresh drinking water

Water should be readily available for children to drink during the breakfast club.

Foods high in fat, salt and sugar

These items are not permitted under the standards and should be avoided. This includes Items such as:

- packaged cereal bars
- processed fruit bars
- pre-packaged croissants
- chocolate and chocolate coated products and confectionery

Foods and drinks to limit

Processed meat products such as sausages and bacon can only be served once a week in primary schools, which applies across the whole school day.

Pastry and deep-fried products can be served no more than twice a week, which applies across the whole school day.

Fruit and vegetable juices should be limited to 150ml portions.

Condiments, table sauces, honey and sweet spreads should be served in portion sizes of no more than 10g or one teaspoonful.

Procurement of food produce

Schools can choose how to source and deliver food as best meets their needs and

in accordance with relevant public procurement legislation. There are a number of models that schools can consider, such as:

- sourcing food directly from suppliers, including breakfast club providers, partners or supermarkets or using an existing food supply contract
- utilising an existing catering contract or putting in place a new catering contract with a local authority or private catering company
- using a buying framework including from a public buying organisation or consortia

Schools may wish to use the [sustainable procurement: the government buying standards](#) which includes lots of good advice around sustainable sourcing.

Local authority catering services may also be able to support schools with delivery, potentially by varying existing lunch contracts to include breakfast provision.

Schools using a catering company or external provider to deliver the food aspect of their breakfast club will want to check that the company they are using is registered as a food business operator. This means they will receive a food hygiene rating and be inspected by Food Safety Officers at regular intervals.

It is important that schools use reputable suppliers to supply and handle food safety.

Schools that do not have food business operator registration and choose to deliver the food offer using their own staff will need to register separately from other operators.

Further details can be found in [food business registration](#). The Food Standards Agency also have helpful guidance for food business operators in [starting your food business safely](#).

Legal requirements for schools and caterers

The [Requirements for School Food Regulations 2014](#) set out the mandatory standards for food served in schools at lunch and other than at lunch, which includes breakfast clubs.

Under [section 100 of the Children and Families Act 2014](#), schools have a duty to support pupils with medical conditions.

The statutory guidance on [supporting pupils at school with medical conditions](#)

explains schools responsibilities. This should include ensuring that a child with an allergy is able to eat breakfast at school. Please see the existing [allergy guidance for schools](#) if you need further advice on supporting children with allergies.

The [Food Information Regulations 2014](#) require all food businesses, including school caterers, to show allergen ingredients information for the food they serve. This makes it easier for schools to identify the food that pupils with allergies can and cannot eat.

The food information regulations include requirements for the labelling of allergens on prepacked for direct sale (PPDS) foods. These are foods that are packaged on the premises before the consumer orders them. Read the Food Standards Agency's [advice for schools, colleges and nurseries](#).

For schools who have reception aged pupils schools will also need to follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements as set out in section 3 of the [EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers](#).

Engaging parents and carers

When communicating with parents and carers, it's important to seek their feedback on the provision you are running and highlight the benefits to children of attending breakfast clubs.

You should consider:

- regularly asking about the kind of provision they feel they need and want
- asking for their feedback on the activities you are running
- find out what support parents, carers and others in the local community can offer, like running activities or volunteering
- sharing updates on the provision with parents and carers, and update them on successes

When communicating with parents and carers, schools should provide up-to-date information to keep them informed on a regular basis, helping them to feel engaged and supported by the club. Schools could consider a range of ways to achieve this, such as:

- a regular newsletter or mail-outs

- updating your website or social media
- using a noticeboard
- providing leaflets or posters

Schools should consider whether parents and carers need to book in advance to attend the breakfast club. If they do, schools should clearly set out how parents and carers are able to do this.

Schools should also ensure booking systems for existing provision work alongside the principle of universal access and allow equal access to families that access any part of the wraparound provision.

Funding

There is detailed information about [payment allocations, methodology, grant conditions and reporting requirements](#) available.

Early adopter schools will be funded directly by DfE. You should use this funding to cover:

- food including delivery
- staffing costs

We will make:

- an upfront payment consisting of a one-off payment to cover set-up costs and a lump-sum payment to cover fixed-admin and start-up staffing costs between April and May 2025
- a second payment, in arrears, between October and December 2025

The amount you receive in the second payment will be based on the number of children attending the breakfast club. Some schools will also be eligible for an additional amount depending on:

- additional need (Ever 6 FSM)
- the variation in staffing costs based on geographical location

We will aim to communicate payment schedules for the following academic year in summer term 2025.

Grant conditions

The [full grant conditions](#) are available. They outline the requirements of grant recipients, including to provide termly data on take up and other data through an automated form. This must be returned to DfE within the allotted timeframes.

Recipients will also be expected to participate in the monitoring and evaluation of the scheme, including:

- attending focus groups and interviews to share views and experiences
- completing surveys at regular intervals on implementation and delivery
- providing any data or additional insights which may assist in monitoring and evaluating the scheme, including parent views and pupil-level data
- receiving visits from DfE officials

Related government programmes

National School Breakfast Programme (NSBP)

We will continue to run the [national school breakfast programme](#) (NSBP) while we deliver the early adopter scheme. Early adopter schools currently on the NSBP will transfer over to the new programme funding.

NSBP schools may continue to access support and order food from the delivery partner Family Action. Food and delivery costs will be charged at 100% of costs given that the new grant funding will include food and delivery. Family Action will contact former NSBP early adopter schools to provide more details on the ordering process.

Wraparound Childcare Programme

The [national wraparound childcare programme](#) is being delivered by local authorities given their statutory childcare sufficiency duty. Primary schools in England should

have been contacted by their local authority wraparound lead about how to get involved in the programme.

We published [guidance for schools](#) in early 2024, and this guidance still applies.

It remains our expectation that all parents and carers should be able to access childcare around the school day from 8am to 6pm (or equivalent hours). Although the expectations set out in this guidance are for all pupils to be able to access a breakfast club that is at least 30 minutes in duration, this is a minimum expectation. We would expect all schools to have further full-time wraparound childcare on site that parents and carers are able to pay to access. This childcare should start before the 30 mins and continue after school, unless there is a reasonable justification not to.

The wraparound childcare programme and the breakfast club programme can work together and be mutually supportive. Schools are entitled to receive funding from both programmes, providing there is no double funding as per grant conditions. For example, the wraparound funding can be used to ensure the availability of after school childcare or to extend the before school offer to more than 30 minutes.

We encourage all schools who want to find out more about the wraparound programme to read the relevant guidance and contact their local authority representative.

Holiday Activities and Food (HAF)

The holiday activities and food (HAF) programme provides healthy meals, enriching activities, and free childcare places to children from low-income families, benefiting their health, wellbeing and learning through a network of holiday clubs across England.

Though aimed at children in receipt of benefits related free school meals (FSM) it is not exclusively for them. Local authorities are encouraged to use some of their funding to provide free or subsidised holiday club places for children who are not in receipt of FSM but who the local authority believe could benefit from HAF.

We strongly encourage local authorities to work with holiday clubs in their area to consider opportunities to offer paid for places alongside HAF funded places. This ensures the HAF programme, where possible, supports the provision of childcare during the holidays.

Further information can be found by visiting your local authority's website and searching for HAF. See the [guidance for local authorities](#)

Contact us

DfE is here to support schools in delivering early adopter breakfast clubs. If schools have any questions about guidance, implementation, or requirements, please reach out to us via the department's [customer help portal](#).

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