Department of Health & Social Care

Department for Education

Guidance

School food standards 2027: example menus

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Applies to England

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Introduction

The Department for Education is updating the school food standards (SFS) to reflect the latest government dietary recommendations. Read more about School

food standards in England.

The updated standards will come into force in September 2027, subject to updated legislation being approved in Parliament later this year.

To help caterers understand and apply the updated standards, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has created example menus. The accompanying nutrient analysis shows how the example menus meet nutritional guidelines.

The example menus are for illustration only. There is one 3-week example menu for primary schools and one for secondary schools, each showing menus that meet the updated standards.

The example menus only include food and drinks that were part of the nutrition analysis. There are many other ways to plan menus that comply with the SFS and meet individual schools' preferences.

Read more about the nutrition analysis in 'School food standards 2027: nutrient analysis', which accompany these example menus.

In line with common practice, the primary school menu includes a daily meat, vegetarian and jacket potato option, as well as a selection of desserts and drinks. The secondary school menu includes a daily meat and vegetarian option, as well as a selection of 'grab-and-go' options, desserts and drinks.

Grab-and-go options include pre-packed sandwiches, jacket potatoes, pasta pots and pastry items such as pasties and sausage rolls that are bought from the school canteen but eaten elsewhere.

Primary school menu: week 1

Drinks options available each day:

- water
- milk

Monday

Main items:

- chicken and vegetable biryani, peas and plain roti
- vegetable, chickpea and lentil masala with rice, peas and plain roti (vegetarian)
- jacket potato with beef and lentil chilli and peas

Dessert:

- fruit yoghurt served with fruit
- orange slices

Tuesday

All main items on this day include a portion of pulses incorporated into the dish.

Main items:

- beef and lentil bolognese with 50:50 spaghetti (a mix of half white spaghetti and half wholewheat spaghetti) and green beans
- bean and lentil chilli with rice and salad (vegetarian)
- jacket potato with vegetable masala topping and salad (vegetarian)

Dessert:

- banana bread with apple slices
- fruit yoghurt served with fruit
- pineapple rings

Wednesday

Main items:

- roast chicken with sage and onion stuffing, roast potatoes, Yorkshire pudding, carrots, cauliflower and gravy
- vegetarian roast dinner with sage and onion stuffing, roast potatoes, Yorkshire

pudding, carrots, cauliflower and gravy (vegetarian)

- jacket potato with tuna mayo topping and vegetable sticks

Dessert:

- rice pudding with peaches
- fruit salad

Thursday

Main items:

- macaroni cheese with broccoli (vegetarian)
- bean and cheese quesadillas (filled and toasted tortillas) with coleslaw (vegetarian)
- jacket potato with bean and lentil chilli and salad (vegetarian)

Dessert:

- fruit yoghurt served with fruit
- watermelon pieces

Friday

Main items:

- breaded fish with chips and peas
- vegetarian nuggets with chips and peas (vegetarian)
- jacket potato with baked beans and vegetable sticks (vegetarian)

Dessert:

- custard with banana
- apple slices

Primary school menu: week 2

Drinks options available each day:

- water
- milk

Monday

Main items:

- creamy cheese, chicken and sweetcorn 50:50 pasta bake with carrots
- creamy cheese, bean and tofu 50:50 pasta bake with carrots (vegetarian)
- jacket potato with tuna mayo topping and vegetable sticks

Desserts:

- fruit yoghurt served with fruit
- apple slices

Tuesday

Main items:

- teriyaki pork with mixed vegetable rice and broccoli
- bean chilli with rice and green beans (vegetarian)
- jacket potato with baked beans and coleslaw (vegetarian)

Desserts:

- toasted teacake with sliced banana
- fruit yoghurt served with fruit
- watermelon pieces

Wednesday

Main items:

- Spanish-style chicken strips with seeded flatbread and sweetcorn
- vegetarian roast dinner with sage and onion stuffing, roast potatoes, Yorkshire pudding, carrots, cauliflower and gravy (vegetarian)
- jacket potato with chilli con carne and peas

Desserts:

- rice pudding with dried apricots
- orange slices

Thursday

All main items on this day include a portion of pulses incorporated into the dish.

Main items:

- beef and lentil chilli with rice and green beans
- bean and cheese quesadillas with coleslaw (vegetarian)
- jacket potato with bean and lentil chilli topping with salad (vegetarian)

Desserts:

- fruit yoghurt served with fruit
- banana

Friday

Main items:

- breaded salmon with chips and peas
- vegetarian barbecue fillet and chips with peas (vegetarian)
- jacket potato with baked beans and coleslaw (vegetarian)

Desserts:

- apple crumble with custard
- grapes

Primary school menu: week 3

Drinks options available each day:

- water
- milk

Monday

Main items:

- steak and potato pie with green beans and new potatoes
- mushroom, bean and potato pie with green beans and new potatoes (vegetarian)
- jacket potato with tuna mayo and vegetable sticks

Desserts:

- custard with banana
- orange slices

Tuesday

Main items:

- roast chicken with sage and onion stuffing, roast potatoes, Yorkshire pudding, carrots, cauliflower and gravy
- lentil bolognese with 50:50 spaghetti and sweetcorn (vegetarian)
- jacket potato with beef and lentil chilli and peas

Desserts:

- cheese, crackers and grapes
- watermelon pieces

Wednesday

All main items on this day include a portion of pulses incorporated into the dish.

Main items:

- chicken and lentil curry with rice, naan bread and peas
- chickpea and lentil masala with rice, naan bread and peas (vegetarian)
- jacket potato with bean and lentil chilli topping and salad (vegetarian)

Desserts:

- pineapple upside down cake with custard and berries
- fruit yoghurt served with fruit
- grapes

Thursday

Main items:

- sausage and mash with carrots and gravy
- vegetarian sausage and mash with carrots and gravy (vegetarian)
- jacket potato with vegetable masala and salad (vegetarian)

Desserts:

- rice pudding with dried apricot
- apple slices

Friday

Main items:

- margherita pizza with pasta salad (vegetarian)
- vegetarian cottage pie with carrots and gravy (vegetarian)
- jacket potato with baked beans and coleslaw (vegetarian)

Dessert:

- fruit yoghurt served with fruit
- pineapple rings

Secondary school menu: week 1

Drinks options available each day:

- water
- milk
- still, flavoured water (sugar free)
- still, fruit-flavoured drink (no added sugar)

Monday

All main items and grab-and-go options on this day include a portion of pulses incorporated into the dish.

Main items:

- chicken and lentil curry with rice, plain roti and green beans
- chickpea and lentil masala with rice, plain roti and green beans (vegetarian)

Grab-and-go:

- BBQ chicken wings with rice and kidney beans
- jacket potato with vegetable masala topping and salad (vegetarian)
- tomato and lentil pasta pot with roasted vegetables (vegetarian)

Desserts:

- fruity flapjack with grapes
- fruit yoghurt served with fruit
- fruit salad pot

Tuesday

Main items:

- beef bolognese with 50:50 spaghetti and sweetcorn
- tomato and lentil 50:50 pasta with sweetcorn (vegetarian)

Grab-and-go:

- steak and potato pastry slice with new potatoes and corn cob
- tuna mayo baguette with carrot sticks and houmous
- jacket potato with bolognese topping and salad

Desserts:

- fruit yoghurt served with fruit
- fruit salad pot

Wednesday

Main items:

- sweet chilli salmon and vegetable noodles
- vegetarian sweet chilli and vegetable noodles (vegetarian)

Grab-and-go:

- jacket potato with baked beans and spring greens (vegetarian)
- teriyaki chicken with potato wedges and coleslaw
- chicken tikka sandwich with roasted vegetables

Desserts:

- blueberry muffin with apple slices
- fruit yoghurt served with fruit
- fruit salad pot

Thursday

Main items:

- beef lasagne with salad
- macaroni cheese with salad (vegetarian)

Grab and go:

- tomato and lentil pasta with roasted vegetables (vegetarian)
- jacket potato with bolognese and salad
- tuna and sweetcorn sandwich with carrot and cucumber sticks

Desserts:

- rice pudding with dried apricots
- fruit salad pot

Friday

Main items:

- breaded fish with chips and peas
- bean burger with chips and peas (vegetarian)

Grab-and-go:

- margherita pizza with pasta salad (vegetarian)
- chicken, pesto and cheese panini with salad
- Spanish-style chicken flatbread with corn cob

Desserts:

- fruit yoghurt served with fruit
- fruit salad pot

Secondary school menu: week 2

Drinks options available each day:

- water
- milk
- still, flavoured water (sugar free)
- still, fruit-flavoured drink (no added sugar)

Monday

Main items:

- chilli con carne with rice and roasted butternut squash

- bean and lentil chilli with rice and roasted cauliflower (vegetarian)

Grab-and-go:

- jacket potato with bean and lentil chilli topping and salad (vegetarian)
- egg mayo baguette with carrot sticks and houmous (vegetarian)
- Chinese-style chicken and vegetable rice box

Desserts:

- apple crumble with custard and berries
- fruit yoghurt served with fruit
- fruit salad pot

Tuesday

Main items:

- sausage and mash with spring greens and gravy
- vegetarian sausage and mash with cabbage and gravy (vegetarian)

Grab-and-go:

- chicken tikka sandwich with roasted vegetables
- falafel pitta with roasted vegetables and tzatziki dressing (vegetarian)
- chicken pasta salad

Dessert:

- fruit yoghurt served with fruit
- fruit salad pot

Wednesday

All main items and grab-and-go options on this day include a portion of pulses

incorporated into the dish.

Main items:

- beef and lentil bolognese with 50:50 pasta and sweetcorn
- lentil bolognese with 50:50 pasta and sweetcorn (vegetarian)

Grab-and-go:

- macaroni cheese with beans and green beans (vegetarian)
- red pepper and houmous wrap with chickpea and sweetcorn salsa (vegetarian)
- jerk chicken with rice and kidney beans

Desserts:

- banana bread with orange slices
- fruit yoghurt served with fruit
- fruit salad pot

Thursday

Main items:

- roast pork with apple sauce, new potatoes, broccoli, Yorkshire pudding and gravy
- vegetarian roast dinner with new potatoes, broccoli, Yorkshire pudding and gravy (vegetarian)

Grab-and-go:

- garlic and lemon chicken wings with rice and coleslaw
- jacket potato with baked beans and spring greens (vegetarian)
- chicken tikka, rice and salad box

Desserts:

- fruit yoghurt served with fruit
- fruit salad pot

Friday

Main items:

- breaded fish with chips and peas
- Tex-Mex bean fajitas with chips and green beans (vegetarian)

Grab-and-go:

- cheese panini with salad (vegetarian)
- jacket potato with tuna mayo and salad
- tomato and lentil pasta with roasted vegetables (vegetarian)

Desserts:

- custard with peaches
- fruit salad pot

Secondary school menu: week 3

Drinks options available each day:

- water
- milk
- still, flavoured water (sugar free)
- still, fruit-flavoured drink (no added sugar)

Monday

Main items:

- chicken curry with rice, naan bread and peas

- chickpea dhal with rice, spinach and naan bread (vegetarian)

Grab-and-go:

- egg mayo baguette with carrot sticks and houmous (vegetarian)
- chicken pasta salad
- jacket potato with vegetable masala topping and salad (vegetarian)

Desserts:

- fruit yoghurt served with fruit
- fruit salad pot

Tuesday

All main items and grab-and-go options on this day include a portion of pulses incorporated into the dish.

Main items:

- beef and lentil bolognese with pasta and green beans
- Brazilian black bean stew with rice and roasted butternut squash (vegetarian)

Grab-and-go:

- Southern-style chicken burger with Mexican bean salad
- jacket potato with bean and lentil bolognese topping and salad (vegetarian)
- tomato and lentil pasta with roasted vegetables (vegetarian)

Desserts:

- lemon and courgette cake with peach slices
- fruit yoghurt served with fruit
- fruit salad pot

Wednesday

Main items:

- beef mince with new potatoes, dumplings and carrots
- vegetarian cottage pie with carrots and gravy (vegetarian)

Grab-and-go:

- jacket potato with baked beans and spring greens (vegetarian)
- Chinese-style chicken and vegetable rice box
- tuna mayo baguette with carrot sticks and houmous

Desserts:

- rice pudding with sultanas
- fruit salad pot

Thursday

Main items:

- chicken meatballs in tomato sauce with mashed potato and broccoli
- vegetarian meatballs in tomato sauce with mashed potato and broccoli (vegetarian)

Grab-and-go:

- margherita pizza with pasta salad (vegetarian)
- teriyaki chicken with potato wedges and coleslaw
- chicken pasta salad

Desserts:

- toasted teacake with pineapple rings

- fruit yoghurt served with fruit
- fruit salad pot

Friday

Main items:

- creamy cheese, salmon and broccoli 50:50 pasta bake with roasted Mediterranean vegetables
- tomato and lentil 50:50 pasta with sweetcorn (vegetarian)

Grab-and-go:

- chicken tikka rice and salad box
- falafel pitta with roasted vegetables and tzatziki dressing (vegetarian)
- jacket potato with vegetarian chilli topping and salad (vegetarian)

Desserts:

- pineapple upside down cake with custard and berries
- fruit yoghurt served with fruit
- fruit salad pot

Development of example menus

In autumn 2025, DHSC worked with the Department for Education and commissioned research agency Verian to pilot the initial set of proposed updates to the SFS.

A sample of 11 pilot schools trialled the proposals for a period of up to 6 weeks. They provided feedback on feasibility, acceptability, effect on nutrition and cost implications. Pilot school caterers designed the menus used in the trial. Verian collected these menus and carried out a nutritional analysis.

The pilot findings were used to inform amendments to the proposed

updated SFS before public consultation. The findings from the consultation then informed the final standards which have been used in this menu analysis.

The consultation and response are available at school food standards: updating the legislative framework. The response has further details on the changes made to the standards since the consultation.

DHSC designed the menus used for this modelling exercise using a selection of menu items commonly served by the pilot schools. This was to ensure that the menus are recognisable and representative of what is often served in schools.

The pilot menus were based on the initial proposed standards. Because of this, some menu items needed adjusting to fully comply with the final standards published in the consultation response. You can find more details on this in the 'Limitations and assumptions' section of the accompanying nutritional analysis.

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