



Healthy Schools
Healthier Living & Learning

National Healthy Schools Programme



**Guidance for Schools
on Healthy Eating**

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Lunch-time Poem

Clock's Ticking

3rd lesson, 5 minutes to go,
Slyly starting to pack up our things,
Coughing to cover the sound of our pencil cases,
Shrugging on coats,
On your marks – wrists in sleeves,
Get ready – bags on your shoulder,
There's the bell – Go!
Clock's ticking.

Leaving the chaos of the classroom,
Into the teenage tornado.
A distant voice of "Don't run!"
Falls on ears deaf from hunger.
Navigating the way to our lockers,
Mooring ourselves to our belongings,
Stopping only a moment,
Before being dragged along
By the surging tide of people.
Clock's ticking.

Joining the first stage of the race,
Huddled together against the elements,
Pleading with the Door Monitor
To let us join the next queue.
Clock's ticking.

15 minutes have passed.
Been kicked, punched and shoved into the wall,
The daily initiation for lunch.
I see a wide-eyed Year Seven,
Fresh meat for the queue-grinder.
Our minds wander to pass the time.

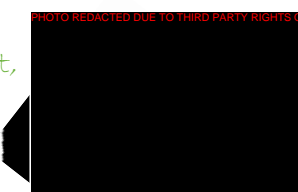
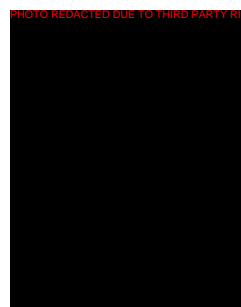
I've got homework.
I need to see Miss Smith.
I'd like to catch up with friends
If I can find them again in the queue.
Clock's ticking.

It's got worse.
The dinner ladies are trying
To sort the "free mealers".
"Stand on the left if you're
'financially embarrassed".
Clock's ticking.

Suddenly, striding through the little people
Comes our maths teacher
All tweed and leather patches.
Fresh out of 'Greenwoods'
With coffee stains and smelling of cigarettes.

Straight to the front of the queue,
Taking the best and getting extra
'Cos the staff fancy him.
Clock's ticking.

I look to my feet,
I'm standing on a large carrot,
Like a crushed, orange slug
Stuck to my shoe.
I've got drama in here next.
I know the dregs of lunch
Will be embedded into my hair.
Clock's ticking.



Finally at the front of the queue.
"What culinary delights will be left?"
I ask myself.
The disappointment of the anti climax
Dawns upon me,
As I realise there is nothing left. I wait to eat.
"Oh well, I'll settle for a couple of flapjacks again."
At least I don't need plastic cutlery to eat that,
But I'm given the childproof knife and
fork anyway.
It goes with my polystyrene plate
That has folded under the weight of the flapjack.
Clock's ticking.

I now queue to pay.
It's funny how the healthy option
Is more expensive than the burgers and chips.
Clock's ticking.

The last leg.
I scan the room beady eyed.
No hope of sitting with my friends.
Before I've even sat down
The dinner lady is ushering us along.
Surely meal times are social and enjoyable?
Parts of the educational process?
Yeah right.
The joy of being a battery hen!
Clock's ticking.

I finally sit down,
Having been one of the vultures
That hover waiting for a seat.
Over my shoulder
I feel more vultures waiting for me.
Suppose I should be grateful,
At least I get lunch today.
Yesterday I was in detention.
Clock's ticking.

"Come on! Eat up! No time for talking!"
Even though there is 10 minutes left.
They hurry us along so they can go home.
Clock's ticking.

Sitting down I need a drink.
Do I join the queue again
Or plead for a glass of tap water
And get told that
"Water is 50p a bottle?"
I'd lose my seat anyway
So I go without.
Clock's ticking.

At last I'm done.
Leaving late for form,
I'm still hungry.
I won't concentrate in class
And I know tomorrow it starts again.

Our Dream - (we look dreamy).
One day, hopefully not too far from now,
Dinner times and dining halls
Will be a happy, sociable experience,
With a clean environment,
Plenty of seats,
Where we can talk with friends,
Have a meal of our choice
That we can afford and enjoy,
With access to free water,
Music playing gently in the background.

Contents

Lunch-time poem – Clock’s Ticking	Pg2
Foreword	Pg6
Introduction	Pg8
Background	Pg9
The response	Pg9
What role should schools play?	Pg10
Criteria for the Healthy Eating core theme	Pg12
Other initiatives that can be used to achieve and maintain the Healthy Eating core theme criteria	Pg34
Extended schools	Pg34
Sustainable schools	Pg34
Food Standards Agency	Pg35
5 A Day	Pg36
Food Partnership Training	Pg36
School Food Trust Million Meals	Pg36
Early Years Foundation Stage	Pg37
Other Initiatives	Pg37
How Healthy Eating can contribute to achieving the outcomes of Every Child Matters (ECM)	Pg38
References and Websites	Pg40
Lunch-time poem – Clock’s Ticking 2	Pg42

Foreword

The poem shown at the beginning of this guidance, written by children and young people from YoH! (a consultative and participatory health forum in Leeds), represents the old-fashioned perception of food in schools. If you take on board the suggestions in this guidance, you will help improve the eating experiences of children and young people. The poem at the end highlights a different experience and is the one we hope all schools will aspire to.

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Introduction

This guidance has been written to help schools have in place the minimum evidence to meet the criteria for the core theme of Healthy Eating, in order to achieve National Healthy School Status (NHSS). It should be used alongside the programme's Food in Schools Toolkit and also the Healthy Eating Criteria Map which highlights national initiatives.

More information on these documents can be found on the **National Healthy Schools Programme (NHSP) website:** www.healthyschools.gov.uk

This guidance is suitable for a wide audience, but is mainly targeted at school leaders, teachers leading schools in achieving National Healthy School Status, governors, Local and Regional Co-ordinators of the National Healthy Schools Programme, and colleagues with a health improvement remit.

Children and young people are at the heart of making the right choices on healthy eating and they have made a valuable contribution to this document. The voice of children and young people is widely used in a number of

sections including the case studies. Many of these children and young people are involved with YoH! (Youth on Health), which is part of the Leeds Education Healthy Schools Initiative and supports the Citizenship & Investors in Pupils' Initiatives.

To achieve NHSS schools must meet criteria under four core themes¹ using the whole school community.²

Whether your school is participating in the NHSP, or has achieved NHSS, this document can act as a springboard to inspire different approaches. It can enable you to learn from the ideas of other schools and can help you develop a personalised approach for your school to adopt, own and be proud of achieving a truly healthy school.

¹NHSP (2007) Introduction to the National Healthy Schools Programme

²NHSP (2007) Whole School Approach to the National Healthy Schools Programme

Background

Over the last few years, there has been growing concern over the current and future physical and emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people at school. Those whose diet or physical activity levels are not healthy may become overweight, obese or even underweight. All these things can have a substantial impact on health, both in childhood and in later life.

The Health Survey for England 2005³ showed that levels of obesity are rising among children. For example, in boys and girls aged between 2 and 10 years, rates of obesity have increased from 10 percent to 17 percent in a 10-year period (1995-2005).

The response

There has been an increased focus on healthy eating in recent Government commitments.

- The importance of a whole school approach to healthy eating and drinking was highlighted by a number of key commitments in the 2004 Public Health White Paper *Choosing Health: Making healthier choices easier*.⁴
- The Food in Schools Toolkit⁵ was launched in

2005 to inspire and support schools in implementing healthier food and drink throughout the school day.

- The need to improve children's diets has been supported by the Public Service Agreement Target⁶ which says: "Our ambition is to reverse the rising tide of obesity and overweight in the population, by enabling everyone to achieve and maintain a healthy weight. Our initial focus will be on children: By 2020, we aim to reduce the proportion of overweight and obese children to 2000 levels."
- The Government has also announced new compulsory standards for school food.⁷ There are three parts and all are to be phased in by 2009. Together they cover all food and drinks sold or served in schools including breakfast, tuck, vending, mid-morning break, lunch and after-school food.
- The School Food Trust was set up to provide independent advice and support to schools in meeting the new standards.
- As part of the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme (SFVS)⁸ all 4 to 6-year-old children, in local education authority maintained infant, primary and special schools in England, are eligible to receive a free piece of fruit or vegetable every school day. Close to two million children in over 16,500 schools across

³DH (2005) The Health Survey for England

⁴DH (2004) *Choosing Health: Making healthier choices easier*

⁵NHSP (2005) Food in Schools Toolkit

⁶DH (2007) Public Service Agreement Target

⁷DCSF (2006), School Food Standards

⁸DH (2004) School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme

England (more than 99 percent of eligible schools) are participating in the scheme.

- From September 2008, all secondary school young people will be provided with the entitlement to cook under Licence to Cook.⁹ In addition, changes have been made to Design and Technology in the National Curriculum so that there is a more explicit practical food element.

What role should schools play?

Eating habits are developed during childhood. If encouraged to enjoy healthier food and drink early on, it is more likely that these positive behaviours will remain with children and young people throughout life.

Children and young people spend, on average, a quarter of their waking lives in schools, so schools can have a positive influence over their knowledge, experience and behaviour. The knowledge developed in the classroom about a healthier diet, the food and drink that is offered and promoted throughout the school day, as well as the attitude of the whole school community, can have a major influence on children and young people. The lifelong learning skills they need to make appropriate food choices and to develop a positive attitude towards diet and health can all be influenced at school.

It is important that messages about healthy eating and healthy lifestyles are consistent. Schools can help provide these and, by involving the whole school community, they can help encourage healthier behaviour outside of the school environment as well.

⁹British Nutrition Foundation, The Design and Technology Association and Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (2008) Licence to Cook

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Criteria for the Healthy Eating core theme

This section provides a detailed illustration of how the NHSP criteria relating to the Healthy Eating core theme can be met by schools. Some suggestions have come from children and young people.

All the case studies have been summarised but full versions are available on the **NHSP website** along with more Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). See: www.healthyschools.gov.uk

2.1 Has an identified member of the Senior Management Team to oversee all aspects of food in schools

Minimum Evidence:

- there is a named member of the Senior Management Team (SMT/SLT) to oversee all aspects of food in schools
- the person's role in relation to healthy eating is known by staff.

Your school should consider

- Are all our staff aware which member of the SMT/SLT is leading on food in school?
- Do we have a job description detailing work on food and including any supporting roles?
- Is this job description available to our whole school community, for example via the school website, to help everyone understand responsibilities and roles?
- Does the senior leader keep our whole school community fully informed about all aspects of food in the school and is this communication clear?

Frequently asked question:



What should I do if the SMT/SLT says they are too busy?

- Ask if the SMT/SLT would be happy for you to lead on some aspects of food in school provided you keep them informed of the work that you are doing.
- Have a whole school approach.
- Set up a task group including members of the whole school community to help.

Case Study

Guiseley School, Leeds

This Leeds secondary school set up a meeting with representatives from the whole school community, including young people, parents/carers, teachers and catering staff, as well as a local farmer and governors to discuss priorities relating to food in school.

The group decided that they should improve the dining hall environment and agreed targets for achieving this. They also came up with the idea of linking the project to subjects, such as Art and Woodwork, and to gain the help of these departments.

The teacher with responsibility for food in school was also involved with running the school council. She says that the key was having one person in charge of the project, who was prepared to present it to governors and therefore make it possible. Now the main aim is to continue to involve the wider school community through this group. In future they are hoping the discussion will also include the global environment.



What children and young people say

- Everybody needs to be aware of who is responsible for food in the school.
- Children and young people should be asked what they think about the food in the school.
- The person responsible for food in the school should work with the school council and catering staff to write the Food Policy.



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2.2 Ensures provision of training in practical food education for staff, including diet, nutrition, food safety and hygiene

Minimum evidence:

- the school's CPD file evidences how staff needs regarding practical food education are identified
- staff (such as Food Technology and PSHE teachers) can discuss their experience of appropriate CPD – examples might include the local training by community dietitians, DCSF Food Partnerships Programme, food safety and hygiene courses.

Note: This criterion should directly support 2.9 on teaching children and young people about food preparation and safety.

Your school should consider

- Have we budgeted for relevant training for all staff involved in practical food education?
- Do we give staff the opportunity to identify any training they require, including attendance at training events?
- Do we give staff time to attend training?
- Do we need to discuss with our caterers what training they have already received?
- Is training available to children and young people, where appropriate?
- Do we give staff the opportunity to share their successes and training experiences with the rest of the school?

- Can our staff provide evidence of a broad range of training?
- Do we give all staff dealing with food the opportunity to undertake food hygiene qualifications?

Frequently asked question:



How do we work with the school caterer to ensure that staff have the training they need?

- Ask catering staff what they need to improve their service and use this as a starting point for communication.
- Involve them right from the start and be careful and tactful in your approach.
- If you are using outside caterers, speak to them to find out what training they have received and what is planned for their CPD.
- Make sure you know what training is available and that you can explain the advantages and encourage participation.
- Work with catering staff so they feel part of the team.
- Use your Healthy Schools Task Group to support you.

Case Study

Ruislip High School, London Borough of Hillingdon

The catering manager, who has won the prestigious Best Dinner Laddie award in the BBC Radio Food and Farming Awards 2007, operates a successful open-door policy in the school kitchen. He encourages a hands-on-approach where young people independently cook and operate a full breakfast service. As well as this, during the course of each day young people arrive in the kitchen, when they have free time, to prepare and cook the lunches, work on food preparation, stock replenishment and clearing up. The kitchen produces over 700 meals each day.

There is a junior chef club on four afternoons a week with over 80 young people (in small groups) preparing meals to take home for their families. They also participate in workshops.

With regards health and safety, many people are surprised that the young people are involved in a potentially hazardous environment. But the young people are encouraged to make judgements and keep themselves safe. There is a high ratio of staff to young people. All of those taking part are fully inducted and must prove themselves as responsible and motivated. They are also expected to follow simple rules such as no running and not touching anything without authorisation and they learn about basic food hygiene.

The school provides meals to two primary schools in the area, which are without their own cooking facilities, and this is expected to increase to five schools in 2008.



What children and young people say

- Consider what training is needed for caterers and teachers.
- Caterers are needed just as much as teachers.
- Training should be given on how to present food and make portions equal.
- The dining hall is a restaurant and it should be treated like one.
- Training could be given to children and young people so that they can volunteer to help.
- Children and young people would like training on how food affects their development.



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2.3 Has a Whole School Food Policy – developed through wide consultation, implemented, monitored and evaluated for impact

Minimum Evidence:

- children, young people, staff, parents/carers, governors and caterers are/have been involved in policy development and can describe their involvement
- a policy is available covering all aspects of food and drink at school, including appropriate curriculum links, reference to policy regarding packed lunches/food brought into school and children and young people going off-site to purchase food
- the policy is referred to in the school prospectus/profile
- the policy is regularly communicated to the entire school community
- the policy and its impact is reviewed on an ongoing basis to reflect current DCSF standards.

Your school should consider

- Do we consult with members of the Healthy Schools Task Group?
- Is our consultation broad and tailored to meet the needs of different groups of people?
- Do we consult parents/carers in advance of any proposed changes and anticipate how they are likely to react, especially when it comes to lunch boxes?

- Do we include a packed lunch section in our Food Policy, where we can highlight what foods could be included in a packed lunch?
- Is our Food Policy broad and does it cover all aspects of healthy eating, at all times of the school day?
- Does our Food Policy link with the school curriculum?
- Have we gained the support of the whole school community, including parents/carers, on the contents of the Food Policy?
- Did we get governors to sign off the final Food Policy?
- How can we best implement the Food Policy and how can we monitor its implementation?

Frequently asked question:



Where do I start with writing a Food Policy?

- Talk to your Local Programme Co-ordinator for the National Healthy Schools Programme.
- Look at the School Food Trust and Food in Schools websites for examples of draft policies.
- Ask neighbouring schools for their Food Policy.
- Talk to all staff, making sure that catering, supervisory staff and members of a Healthy Schools Task Group are involved.
- See what policies already exist before embarking on a new one.

Frequently asked question:



Do I include packed lunches in the Food Policy?

- It is important to include packed lunches in your Food Policy.
- Make sure that children and young people and parents/carers are involved.
- Include in the policy actions to be taken if something is brought in that is not allowed, including any monitoring which will take place.
- Suggest the best sort of food to be included in a packed lunch in parent/carer guidance.
- Ask children and young people to write the policy on packed lunches.

The SNAG developed a Whole School Food Policy and a School Catering Policy. The school embarked on a programme of visits to feeder schools to engage the next intake of Year Seven young people and set up a catering "Drop-in Zone" for young people to have questions answered and ideas discussed on a weekly basis.

As a result of these changes, the average hot meal uptake increased from 12 to 130 meals a day in the first term.



What children and young people say

- Schools should ask all children and young people what they want through circle time or similar means, and not just the school council.
- Schools should involve children and young people who have helped write policies such as the Anti-Bullying policy, to help write the Food Policy.



Case Study

Teesdale School, County Durham (provided by the School Food Trust)

Early in 2005, a governor task group at Teesdale School unanimously decided that in-house provision was the desired route to take when their existing catering contract expired. Changes began in July 2005 when a head chef/catering manager was appointed. A Schools Nutrition Action Group (SNAG) consisting of governors, the chef, restaurant manager, teachers and members of the school council was also set up.

For more information on writing a Food Policy visit the **Food in Schools Toolkit**.

2.4 Involves children, young people and parents/carers in guiding the food policy and practice within the school, enables them to contribute to healthy eating and acts on their feedback

Minimum Evidence:

- children, young people and parents/carers are/have been involved in guiding the school's Food Policy and can describe their involvement
- children, young people and parents/carers agree that their feedback relating to policy has been appropriately considered.

Your school should consider

- Have we effectively involved children and young people and their parents/carers?
- Do we have a robust system for collecting and discussing feedback?
- Do we communicate the outcomes of discussions with children and young people, their parents/carers and the whole school community?

Frequently asked question:



How can I get parents/carers involved?

- Target parent evenings and school social occasions.
- Use newsletters and websites to advertise meetings.
- If you don't succeed, keep trying.
- Encourage various types of involvement.
- Get children and young people involved and encourage them to use "pester power".
- Ask parents/carers how they would like to be involved.
- Talk with community groups in the wider community.
- Use notice boards in and around the school to increase awareness.
- Work with school nurses.
- Include grandparents and members of the extended family.
- Forge links with local employers.
- Publicise successes in the local media.

Case Study

Middlecott School, Lincolnshire (provided by the School Food Trust)

Middlecott School is a small secondary school in Lincolnshire. Having researched links between diet, performance and behaviour, the Headteacher decided to revise the school's food provision in an effort to improve achievement. At the time there was only one member of the kitchen staff with qualifications in basic food preparation and the kitchen needed considerable refurbishment. A new school Food Policy was produced, the kitchen was refurbished and the eating environment revamped. A local further education college agreed to provide two chefs for two days per week, for a period of eight to ten weeks, to train and accredit members of the catering team. Following this training the hourly rate for members of the kitchen team was raised to reflect a higher skill level, and a director of catering was appointed.

This substantial programme of change was achieved in a short time frame, which was challenging in itself. The commitment of the governors has led to the school subsidising this project until it breaks even financially. The quality of food provision has improved to meet interim standards and uptake has increased. The school says that behaviour has improved and describes the environment as calm and orderly.



What children and young people say

- Each year group or form could pick a menu each week.
- Menus used for lunches could be written down so that they can be tried at home as well.
- As part of an open day for prospective parents/carers there could be a food tasting session.
- Children and young people could be shown how to grow their own food.
- Visits to local farms could be organised to see how food is produced.
- Targets could be set to improve food in school.
- Schools should talk to a wide selection of children and young people, more than the school council, and they should act on their advice.



For more information on how to engage parents/carers, see a case study written by a parent from Merton on the **NHSP website:**
www.healthyschools.gov.uk

2.5 Has a welcoming eating environment that encourages the positive social interaction of children and young people

Minimum Evidence:

- the school has developed healthy/welcoming aspects of the dining room environment – including display and labelling of food, promoting healthy eating, ready availability of water, appropriate queuing arrangements, adequate time available to purchase and at meals, non-stigmatisation of FSME children and young people, social dining and cleanliness
- children, young people and staff feel that the dining area makes a positive contribution to the dining experience including adequate time available to eat their meal and avoiding stigmatisation of FSME children and young people.

Your school should consider

- Have we involved the whole school community in regular assessments of the current dining facilities and break time routines, through questionnaires or focus groups?
- Do we include in our assessments the whole break time experience, such as eating packed lunches and queuing in hallways?
- Have we produced a plan detailing improvements which are achievable and realistic in the time and budget available and have we made this available to the whole school community?
- Have we looked at the top tips on the NHSP website about how to improve the dining

room environment (many of these are low or no cost ideas?)

- Do we enable children and young people to see the food choices that are available?
- Have we promoted a new dining experience to the whole school community by inviting them to an open-house event?
- Have we monitored and evaluated the success of the new environment, including comparison with baseline data collected at the start of the development?
- Have we looked at the advice in the School Food Trust publication: A fresh look at the school meal experience,¹⁰ for ideas?
- Do we encourage children and young people having school meals to sit with those eating a packed lunch and do we make sure that those receiving free school meals are not stigmatised?
- Have we looked at the guidance in the NHSP Food in Schools Toolkit on dining rooms?

Frequently asked question:



How can I turn a school hall into a pleasant eating environment with no money?

- Give children and young people more time to enjoy the social element of eating together.
- Make sure the hall is clean, including brushing and washing the floor before and after lunch.
- Use free posters and free resources from sources such as the Food in Schools Toolkit and the School Food Trust.
- Encourage children and young people to create and display artwork promoting healthy eating.

¹⁰School Food Trust (2007) A fresh look at the school meal experience

- Consider the layout of the hall and its impact on the environment.
- Use some of the skills within the school such as art, design and technology or music to make improvements.
- Ask for help from the wider community including parents/carers and businesses.



What children and young people say

- Children and young people should be able to enjoy the atmosphere and relax.
- Music should be played during mealtimes.
- There should be places to eat outside, with seating.
- Plastic trays should be replaced with plates.
- Staggered lunch-times should be used.
- There could be a sandwich counter by the door for “grab and go” lunches.
- Arrange the furniture to reduce queuing.
- Teachers should eat with children and young people.
- There could be multi-service stations.
- Try having some themed lunches.



Case Study

Youth on Health, Leeds

Youth on Health (YoH!) in Leeds is a children and young people’s consultative and participatory health forum. The children and young people involved in the project ran a number of young delegate events for Headteachers, Deputy Headteachers, school nurses and education-health employees. They put the delegates in some food-related situations which children and young people often experience to see how they would react. For example, they were given dinner money tokens and had menus around the room to choose from. The tokens ranged in value and were £1.40, £1.60, £1.80 £2.00, 50p, nothing or a free school meal. The children and young people found it really interesting to see how the adults responded to the choices available to them and the adults started to see lunchtime from a different perspective.

Another game that the children and young people played was to encourage delegates to improve the layout of a dining hall by moving the furniture. The main aim of the exercise was to reduce queues, something which is often a big concern for children and young people.

For more information on developing the dining room environment visit the **Food in Schools Toolkit**.

2.6 Ensures that breakfast club, tuck shop, vending machine and after-school food service (where available in school) meets or exceeds current DCSF school food standards

Minimum Evidence (only where the service is provided):

- the breakfast club meets or exceeds the current DCSF standards
- the tuck shop meets or exceeds the DCSF standards
- the vending machine meets or exceeds the DCSF standards
- the after-school food service meets or exceeds the DCSF standards
- the named member of the SMT/SLT and the governing body (and Head Caterer where involved in service provision) agree that the non-lunch standards are being met and reviewed regularly.

Your school should consider

- Are the DCSF school food standards understood by all staff with responsibility for food in school?
- Is the governing body aware that it is responsible for implementing and maintaining the DCSF food standards?
- Have we looked at the advice produced by the Food Standards Agency and the National Governors Association?¹¹

- Has everyone involved in non-lunch food provision been involved, such as children, young people, parents/carers and catering staff?
- Do we carefully consider the cost, nutritional value and the demand for the new food?
- Is adequate storage available for all of the food that is used at the school?
- Have we nominated one person to regularly monitor non-lunch standards and are all staff aware of the role they play?
- Do we involve children and young people in marketing and promoting healthier food?
- Have you looked at the School Food Trust guidance on food other than lunches and the NHSP Food in Schools Toolkit?
- Do we engage with extended schools providers to ensure a consistent and coherent approach to food and to ensure DCSF standards are being met?

Frequently asked question:



Children and young people will not eat from our healthy tuck shop. What should we do?

- Make new foods exciting by holding tasting sessions.
- Encourage children and young people to suggest what should be sold.
- Involve children and young people in organising and running the tuck shop.
- Encourage children and young people to design things to sell in the tuck shop.
- Audit what is sold.
- Be creative with your marketing.
- Ask children and young people why and how they could make it better.

¹¹Food Standards Agency and the National Governors Association (2007) Food Policy in Schools – A strategic policy framework for governing bodies (second edition)

Case Study

Boston Spa School, Leeds

The school bought their own vending machine and filled it up with products that are good for you such as sandwiches and yogurts. This created a grab and go lunch system for young people. The vending machine gets filled up before each lunch-time and this means that there is also food left if you have been to an extra-curricular club and the normal lunch-time has finished. The school is now buying more vending machines so more people can use them.

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What children and young people say

- Children and young people should be asked what they would like in the vending machines.
- Children and young people should be told what the school food standards are and child friendly guidance should be put up in school.
- Children and young people should be told why the school food standards are in place.
- Schools should advertise breakfast clubs, including details of the food available.



For more information on healthier breakfast clubs, healthier tuck shops and healthier vending, visit the **Food in Schools Toolkit**.

2.7 Has a school lunch service that meets or exceeds current DCSF standards for school lunches

Minimum Evidence:

- the school lunch service meets or exceeds the current DCSF standards for school lunches
- the named member of the SMT/SLT, the governing body and Head Caterer agree that the DCSF standards for school lunch are being met and review this regularly (at least termly)
- healthy options are promoted
- the caterer can say how minority ethnic and medical/allergy needs have been considered/incorporated in menu planning
- there is appropriate guidance (promoting healthier options) given to children and young people who have packed lunches and their parents/carers.

Your school should consider

- How can we communicate the current DCSF standards for school lunches to the whole school community?
- Do we meet the standards for all food served in the school?
- Do we give consistent messages about food to the children and young people on an everyday basis?
- Do we communicate changes to the lunch service to the whole school community?
- Are changes to the lunch service evaluated and monitored, to determine whether benefits have been achieved?

- How can we consult with the parents/carers of the children and young people who have a packed lunch?
- Is there a section on packed lunches in the school Food Policy?
- Are we sure that any changes to the lunch service do not single out children with free school meal entitlement?
- Have we considered the School Food Trust guidance on school lunch standards?

Frequently asked question:



If the school does not have school meals, how can we reach this standard?

- School lunch standards only apply if the school/local authority (LA) provides a school lunch.
- You can still have a Whole School Food Policy to encourage healthy packed lunches and to make sure any other food in the school, such as in tuck shops or after-school clubs, meets the standards.
- You do not have to meet the lunch standards if you do not provide any lunches. But it is important to remember that any free school meals do have to comply, even if they are cold food.
- Check what is currently provided and ask children and young people how it could be improved.
- Talk to the children, young people and the school community to develop a Packed Lunch Policy.

Case Study

Salt Grammar School, Bradford (provided by the School Food Trust)

Salt Grammar is a Bradford secondary school with approximately 1400 young people. Bradford Council's in-house catering provider, Education Contract Services (ECS), supplies catering services to the school. Three years ago ECS revised its menus to meet the 2006 food-based standards.

The school has now invested in water and vending machines which offer a healthy range of drinks, including juices and smoothies, as well as a range of healthy foods. All the school's products are made fresh each day and no preservatives are used. The school stocks the Taste the World range, including Big Bites, Quick Snacks and Deli Bar. The range reflects the culturally diverse eating options available on the high street.

A healthy reward system is in place and both food and drink items have been allocated a points value by the community dietitians with more points for healthier food. The school is aware of the importance of ensuring that young people are fully informed of any changes and the rationale for them. For example, changes to items from the vending machines were made in stages.



What children and young people say

- Ask for the opinions of children and young people.
- Take note of what is actually being eaten.
- Provide simple guidance for children and young people so that they understand why food standards have been put in place.
- Grow your own fruit and vegetables for school meals – not only is it healthy but it is sustainable as well.



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2.8 Monitors children and young people's menus and food choices to inform policy development and provision

Minimum Evidence:

- the school has developed a system for monitoring menus and choices
- the named member of the SMT/SLT, the governing body and Head Caterer can demonstrate that they use data and how it influences developments.

Your school should consider

- Do we monitor the food choices children and young people make throughout the school year, for example through an electronic swipe card system?
- Do staff think that the children and young people look like they are enjoying their food?
- Do we use systems such as questionnaires or comments boxes to collect the views of children and young people?
- What do parents/carers say their children report back about the food provision?
- Do children and young people have the opportunity to collect their own data?
- How have we tried to identify the factors that discourage children and young people from making certain food choices?
- Do we have a lead teacher in place to make sure systems exist to collate, discuss and act on feedback and collected data?
- Do we use the collected data to help us decide

if it is time to consult further with the children and young people about the food that is being offered to them, particularly if certain dishes are not selling well?

- Have we taken full advantage of staff training opportunities identified as part of the consultation process?
- Have we reported back to the whole school community on developments that have been made?
- Do we monitor the contents of packed lunch boxes to identify whether more information or consultation with parents/carers is needed?

Frequently asked question:



How should we explain our monitoring policy to parents/carers?

- Give clear advice to children, young people and parents/carers on what foods are suitable for a packed lunch, according to the school Food Policy.
- Invite parents/carers into lunch to see how the lunch boxes are monitored and explain why this policy is in place.
- Involve parents/carers in developing the Packed Lunch Policy at the earliest possible stage and keep them informed of developments.
- Consult with children and young people on the Packed Lunch Policy.
- Explain the advantages of having a healthy packed lunch.

For more information on healthier lunchboxes visit the **Food in Schools Toolkit**.

Case Study

Cardinal Wiseman School, Coventry

Cardinal Wiseman School is a secondary school with 1350 young people, in a disadvantaged suburb of Coventry. The school has created a farm and garden containing pigs, sheep, fruit and vegetables, on an old waste ground in the school grounds, with the help of a local builder and staff.

The head of rural studies believes in 'learning through doing' and encourages GCSE Rural Studies students to use their horticultural knowledge through growing their own food. The school is a large city comprehensive, and clearly believes that young people should understand their food from 'the plot to the pot', as well as skills for life and basic science.

The produce is sampled by the children and young people and items are sold both to them and to staff, including sausages made from the organically reared pigs.

The school as a whole benefits from the school's Rural Dimension Status. It is a calm place within the school and many children and young people sit or work there. There are regular farm visits from feeder primary schools and the vegetable garden is a working model for food education.



What children and young people say

- Children and young people should be involved in the monitoring of food choices.
- Children and young people should be asked why they spend money on certain things.
- The school should make a note of what children and young people are not buying.
- Children and young people should be told the results of the monitoring.
- Children and young people should be asked to design the menu to include healthy and favourite options.



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2.9 Ensures that children and young people have opportunities to learn about different types of food in the context of a balanced diet (using the eat-well plate). This should include how to budget, prepare and cook meals, while understanding the need to avoid the consumption of foods high in salt, sugar and fat and increase the consumption of fruit and vegetables

Minimum Evidence:

- there are Schemes of Work for Healthy Eating found in Food Technology, PSHE and other subject areas
- the Schemes of Work and/or out-of-hours activity incorporates age and ability appropriate lessons on a balanced diet, planning, budgeting, preparing, and cooking skills, for ideas and support
- the curriculum considers the emotional aspects of food, the nature of eating disorders, the role of the media and is appropriately connected to aspects of emotional health and wellbeing
- a curriculum map is being developed or is in place.

Your school should consider

- Are staff given enough training for them to confidently promote the healthy eating messages?
- Have we considered using the training provided by the Food Partnership to gain knowledge and understanding of nutrition and healthier eating approaches?
- Have we developed a cross-curricular approach to delivering the topic areas in all activities carried out by children and young people?
- Do we use the Food Standards Agency "Food Competencies" to guide what children and young people should be learning about food?¹²
- Is the emphasis of teaching on a balanced diet?
- Are children and young people given practical experience of preparing healthy food as well as theory, such as through the "Licence to Cook" entitlement in secondary schools?
- Are children and young people taught about the importance of water and that it needs to be drunk regularly throughout the day?
- Do we consult children and young people about what extra information they want to learn about healthy eating and which areas they do not think have been covered?

Frequently asked question:



We don't have cooking facilities to provide practical food lessons, so what should we do?

- Develop a partnership with a neighbouring school that does have facilities. Your school may have some expertise that they could use in return.

¹²Food Standards Agency (2007) Food Competency Framework: food skills and knowledge for young people aged 7-9, 11-12, 14 and 16+

- Focus on classroom based cooking lessons with cold food.
- Take small groups of children and young people to the kitchen area in the staff room or canteen and use this as an opportunity to demonstrate practical food preparation.
- Ask local businesses or your caterers to help.
- Ask parents/carers if they are happy to cook at home with children and young people as part of their homework.



What children and young people say

- Schools should teach children and young people how to cook quick, healthy meals.
- There should be opportunities for children, young people and parents/carers to taste new foods and watch them being prepared.
- Children and young people should be taught about what makes a portion and what counts as five portions of fruit and vegetables a day.
- Children and young people should learn more about the short term instant effects of eating well and what happens if you don't follow a healthy diet.



Case Study

St Mary's Catholic Comprehensive School, Menston, Leeds

The school held a competition to design a catering uniform during Design and Technology classes. There was also a competition to design a meal which could be eaten for lunch. This included working to a budget, using healthy ingredients and balanced portions. Young people were also required to make the meal and present a full recipe with a list of ingredients, the cost per meal and any hygiene measures that needed to be followed. Maths classes were used to develop the budgeting and business studies knowledge, and the hygiene aspects were part of Food Technology.

The young people really enjoyed going through the process and the final meal was cooked by the school kitchens and added to the school menu for a day.

To see how you can teach these messages in other curriculum areas, visit the Healthy Schools website at: www.healthyschools.gov.uk. For more information on healthier cookery clubs see the **Food in Schools Toolkit**.

2.10 Has easy access to free, clean and palatable drinking water, using the Food in Schools guidance

Minimum Evidence:

- Children, young people and staff say they have access to free, clean and palatable drinking water at lunch-time and throughout the day, and have been consulted about where it is located
- the school is monitoring the availability of water and ensures it is being used by children and young people
- water consumption is encouraged and promoted.

Your school should consider

- Are water stations clean and welcoming?
- Is drinking water accessible at all times?
- Do children and young people use water bottles during lessons?
- Is the consumption of drinking water promoted throughout the day as well as at meal times?

Frequently asked question:



The children and young people in my school don't drink water as they say they do not like it. How can I get them drinking more?

- Teach children and young people why it is important to drink healthy fluids frequently throughout the day and the benefits of drinking water.
- Offer other healthy drink options such as fruit juice.
- Be a positive role model.
- Supply chilled water.
- Have a nice environment around the water area.

Case Study

Wimbledon Park Primary School, London (provided by the School Food Trust)

Wimbledon Park Primary in South London has made a number of changes in the school in the last 12 months that have helped the school renew their National Healthy School Status. After being provided with the funds to refurbish kitchen facilities, the number of children eating school dinners has increased four-fold over the past 12 months.

The school has also used a grant to pay for water aid units to provide chilled, filtered water to children throughout the day. As part of their "Water is Cool in School" campaign, each child uses their own reusable plastic bottle to carry their water, increasing education and a sense of responsibility about the importance of hydration.



What children and young people say

- Water fountains should be in the corridor and dining hall so they are easy to get to.
- Cups and bottles should be provided for free.
- Bottles should fit into the gap where the water comes out of the fountain.
- The water needs to be fresh and taste good.
- There should be a bigger tray to drain the water away or a mat of some kind to stop people slipping. A mop could be kept nearby to mop up any spillages.
- Children and young people should take responsibility for mopping up the water they spill.
- There should be more than one water cooler around the school.



For more information on water provision visit the **Food in Schools Toolkit**.

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2.11 Consults children and young people about food choices throughout the school day using school councils, Healthy School task groups or other representative bodies

Minimum Evidence:

- children and young people say that they are regularly (at least termly) and appropriately consulted about food choices – including school meals and food and drink other than lunch.

Your school should consider

- Do planned consultations happen on a regular basis and do we let everybody know when they are going to take place?
- Do we consult using different methods and do we act on the results of the consultations and give feedback to the children and young people?
- Do we have tasting sessions with children and young people and their parents/carers as part of the consultation process?
- Are we aware that unfamiliarity with foods can affect how children and young people feel about food and the choices they make?

Frequently asked question:



How do I make the school council more effective?

- Ask one teacher to take the lead with the school council.
- Introduce targets at every meeting.
- Set dates for regular meetings.
- Involve staff other than teachers, such as learning support assistants and caterers.
- Enable a young person to take the lead as chairperson (if in a secondary school).
- Have a range of committees such as for food, the environment, uniform and behaviour.
- Hold at least two assemblies each term for each year group, to clarify the role of the school council, who the representatives are and what changes they have influenced.
- Consider using a youth worker, if available.
- Make it fun.
- Provide the school council with useful accreditation information, such as on food hygiene.
- Show that you are listening to the ideas of the school council by acting on them.
- Use IT to engage and share information, for example texts, email, and blogs.
- Engage with existing groups of children and young people.

Case Study

St John's Primary School, Gosport (provided by the School Food Trust)

At St John's School in Gosport children have direct input into the school's decision-making processes. One of the most successful projects has been the eco-committee. Attended by one representative from each class and co-ordinated by the Deputy Headteacher, the group had already completed major work on recycling when they decided to put their efforts into healthy eating. They completed a survey on children's attitudes towards lunch-time and monitored a sample selection of lunch boxes. The results shocked the children who then planned a healthy eating week.

Both children and staff were astonished by the impact of the healthy eating week, but the children say they are now proud of the amount of fruit and vegetables they eat. The school plans to repeat a healthy eating week on an annual basis to reinforce the main messages of being healthy. The school says a large part of the project's success was down to the fact that it was inspired by the children.



What children and young people say

- The reasons behind any changes should be explained and clearly communicated to children and young people.
- The consultation should be wider than just the school council.
- There should be a wide range of people involved in making decisions.
- The school should link with the outside community.
- Schools should ask the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) what they think.
- The school needs to consider people's allergies and dietary needs.
- If the school asks for feedback, it should act on it.
- Groups like the school council, health forums and volunteers should be involved in rewriting any guidance, so that it is clear for children and young people.
- Competitions could be run for children and young people to design menus.



2.12 to 2.15 These standards do not need to be required to achieve National Healthy School Status. They are optional and have been included to provide additional information for the School Food Trust.

Other initiatives that can be used to achieve and maintain the Healthy Eating core theme criteria

Extended schools

Promoting achievement and raising standards for all, means looking at the needs of each individual child and young person and offering them new opportunities for learning and development. Extended schools can do just that by improving children and young people's lives, boosting their attainment, supporting families and placing schools at the heart of their communities. Extended schools are Every Child Matters in action. By 2010, all children and young people should have access to a core offer of extended services in and around their school. These include:

- primary schools to provide access to childcare, combined with a varied menu of activities, such as study support
- secondary schools to provide access to a varied menu of study support and enrichment activities, which are fun and stimulating, as well as offering a safe place to be

- swift and easy access to other services, such as those linked with health, with schools ensuring that children and young people with additional needs are identified and are well supported
- parenting support, including family learning sessions
- wider community access to school facilities.

Further information and case studies on how extended services can address the health needs of children and young people are available at: www.tda.gov.uk/extendedschools

Sustainable schools

A sustainable school prepares children and young people for a lifetime of sustainable living, through its teaching, fabric and its day-to-day practices. It is guided by a commitment to care including:

- care for ourselves (our health and wellbeing)
- care for others (across cultures, distances and generations)
- care for the environment (both locally and globally).

Above all, sustainable schools model positive, responsible practices for their communities, hi-lighting all the possibilities of sustainable living. The vision encompassed by sustainable schools, which at its heart is concerned with the wellbeing of children and young people all over the world, offers schools a bigger picture in which to join-up work on a range of policies and initiatives. This can include Every Child Matters, school travel planning, healthy living, extended services, citizenship and learning outside the classroom.

For more information visit:

www.teachernet.gov.uk/sustainableschools

Food Standards Agency

The Food Standards Agency has developed (in consultation with teachers, Healthy Schools Co-ordinators and importantly children and young people) “Food Competences”, which set out the essential food skills and knowledge that children and young people need in order to make healthier lifestyle choices. The competences are grouped in age ranges so that by the ages of 7 to 9, 11 to 12 and 14 to 16+, children and young people are progressively learning about food through the four themes of diet and health; consumer awareness; cooking; and food safety.

The food competences can help schools and the wider community to develop food learning programmes, which provide children and young people with a consistent set of food skills. The competences apply to all aspects of learning and include cooking clubs or cooking at home, as well as in the formal curriculum.

The ultimate aim is to help children and young people develop these important life skills so that they can choose, cook and eat safe healthy food now, and in the future.

For more information about the food competences, go to the Food Standards Agency at: www.food.gov.uk

5 A Day

There are a wide variety of fruit and vegetables to choose from to set you up for a healthier lifestyle.

To get the best health benefits, your 5 A Day portions should include a combination of a variety of fruit and vegetables.

Here are five reasons to eat five portions of fruit and vegetables a day:

- they are packed with vitamins and minerals
- they can help you to maintain a healthy weight
- they are an excellent source of fibre and antioxidants
- they help reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke and some cancers
- they taste delicious and there is so much variety to choose from.

For more information see: www.5aday.nhs.uk

Food Partnership Training

The Food Partnership provides training to help meet the criteria for element 2.2 of the NHSP Healthy Eating core theme criteria. The Food Partnership is one element of the DCSF strand of the Food in Schools programme and it has over 170 accredited trainers in schools across England.

Accredited trainers plan to a specified format and content to include:

- the development of practical food preparation skills
- food hygiene and safety
- nutrition and healthier eating
- the development of food education in the curriculum.

For more information see:

www.foodinschools.org/food_partnerships/index.php

School Food Trust Million Meals

Since September 2006, every child or young person taking a school lunch is guaranteed, by law, a balanced, nutritious meal. We now need to make sure they are eating them and the Million Meals campaign aims to do just that.

The School Food Trust has recently launched the Million Meals campaign which is aimed at increasing the number of school meals eaten every day from around three million to four million.

Headteachers are being encouraged to sign their schools up to the campaign, and by doing so, they will be given access to a range of tailored benefits which will help them make the changes necessary to increase the number of children and young people eating school lunches. This will also support their development towards National Healthy School Status.

For more information see:

www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/millionmeals

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which comes into force in September 2008, is a new framework for the learning, development and care of children in the early years. It will apply to all settings offering provision for children aged from birth until the end of the academic year in which they turn five, including day nurseries, pre-schools, playgroups, childminders and maintained and independent schools. It will require that, where meals, snacks and drinks are provided, they must be healthy, balanced and nutritious, that fresh drinking water must be available at all times and that those responsible for the preparation and handling of food are competent to do so. The EYFS also expects practitioners to encourage children to try healthy food, involve them in the preparation of food and to reinforce messages about healthier choices through, for example, discussions about children's food choices.¹³

For more information see:

www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/EYFS/

Other Initiatives

There are a variety of other initiatives that can be used to help achieve the NHSP Healthy Eating criteria. The Healthy Eating Criteria Map highlights some of these initiatives and how they can be used to achieve the criteria.

For more information see the **NHSP website:**

www.healthyschools.gov.uk

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¹³DCSF (2007) Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation

How Healthy Eating can contribute to achieving the outcomes of Every Child Matters (ECM)

Children and young people have told us that five outcomes are key to wellbeing in childhood and later life. These are:

- being healthy
- staying safe
- enjoying and achieving
- making a positive contribution
- achieving economic wellbeing.

The ECM programme aims to improve these outcomes for all children and young people and to close the gap between the disadvantaged and their peers.¹⁴

Under the “Be Healthy” element, healthy eating is key, alongside the physical activity of the child or young person, in order to help develop their physical health. National Healthy School Status means that the school has involved parents/carers and the wider community in

drawing up its policies and programmes. The outcome of this is that parents/carers have been involved in policy development and have been invited to participate in aspects of school life **(see Criterion 2.4)**.

Under the “Enjoy and Achieve” element, healthy eating helps improve the concentration of children and young people, making them ready to learn. National Healthy School Status means that the school has involved parents/carers and the wider school community in the educational, social and cultural activities of the school. The outcome of this is that children and young people in healthy schools will find that there is more connection between their parents/carers and school, and that messages about learning and health are often shared **(see Criterion 2.9)**.

¹⁴DCSF (2004) Every Child Matters: Change for Children

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Through “Making a Positive Contribution”, National Healthy School Status can mean that the school involves children and young people in decision-making and promotes participation. Children and young people will also play a part in developing and maintaining a positive school culture and a welcoming environment. The outcome of this is that children and young people in healthy schools find that their views and opinion are sought and considered on a range of matters **(see Criterion 2.11)**.

References and Websites

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Department for Children, Schools and Families (2007) Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation www.publications.teachernet.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=SESCO6-18&

Department for Children, Schools and Families (2004) Every Child Matters: Change for Children. London: DCSF

Websites

Here are some useful websites for more information about healthy eating. To find out more about what you can find on these websites and to view a longer list of websites which include useful material on this subject, visit: **www.healthyschools.gov.uk**

5 A DAY – www.5aday.nhs.uk

British Dietetic Association – www.bda.uk.com

British Nutrition Foundation – www.nutrition.org.uk

The Design and Technology Association – www.data.org.uk

Eat well, be well – www.eatwell.gov.uk

Food For Life – www.soilassociation.org/foodforlife

Food Forum – www.foodforum.org.uk/

Food In Schools – www.foodinschools.org

Food Standards Agency – www.food.gov.uk

Health Education Trust – www.healthedtrust.com

Licence to Cook – www.schoolsnetwork.org.uk/cooking

National Healthy Schools Programme – www.healthyschools.gov.uk

School Food Trust – www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk

Teachernet – www.teachernet.gov.uk/growingschools

Lunch-time Poem

Clock's Ticking 2

It is easy to see what has been done,
The review of school eating standards doesn't
look so glum.

Original and organic is what we did need.
So this, to you, is a good deed.

Available, edible and fresh every day,
The school revolution starts today.

Recycle the packaging, drinks and all,
Dining areas will be fit for a ball.

Healthy and affordable, can only get better.
This, my peers will be a trend setter.

Lots more time for our dinner,
The recent review will help keep us trimmer.

Natural products, delicious and attractive,
Increase your input, you've got to get active.

There's a huge selection, tasty and hot.
With your support this won't go to pot!

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Poem written by the children and young people of YOH!

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www.healthyschools.gov.uk

For further information...

please contact your Local Programme Co-ordinator. Their contact details and more information about the National Healthy Schools Programme can be found on our website www.healthyschools.gov.uk

department for
children, schools and families



The National Healthy Schools Programme is a joint Department of Health and Department for Children, Schools and Families initiative