



The School Food Standards

Eating in school should be a pleasurable experience: time spent sharing good food with peers and teachers.

These school food standards are intended to help children develop healthy eating habits and ensure that they get the energy and nutrition they need across the whole school day. It is just as important to cook food that looks good and tastes delicious; to talk to children about what is on offer and recommend dishes; to reduce queuing; and to serve the food in a pleasant environment where they can eat with their friends.

As a general principle, it is important to provide a wide range of foods across the week. Variety is key – whether it is different fruits, vegetables, grains, pulses or types of meat and fish. Children love to hear the stories behind their food. Use fresh, sustainable and locally-sourced ingredients (best of all, from the school vegetable garden), and talk to them about what they are eating. Go to www.schoolfoodplan.com to find examples of what other schools are doing to encourage children to eat well.

Buying foods in line with the Government Buying Standards will help reduce salt, saturated fat and sugar, and increase fruit, vegetable and fibre content.

* This Standard applies across the whole school day, including breakfasts, morning breaks, tuck shops, and after school clubs



Fruit and vegetables

One or more portions of vegetables or salad as an accompaniment every day

One or more portions of fruit every day

A dessert containing at least 50% fruit two or more times each week

At least three different fruits and three different vegetables each week



Foods high in fat, sugar and salt

No more than two portions of food that has been deep-fried, batter-coated, or breadcrumb-coated, each week*

No more than two portions of food which include pastry each week*

No snacks, except nuts, seeds, vegetables and fruit with no added salt, sugar or fat*

Savoury crackers or breadsticks can be served at lunch with fruit or vegetables or dairy food

No confectionery, chocolate or chocolate-coated products*

Desserts, cakes and biscuits are allowed only at lunchtime. They must not contain any confectionery

Salt must not be available to add to food after it has been cooked*

Any condiments must be limited to sachets or portions of no more than 10g or one teaspoonful*



Milk and dairy

A portion of food from this group every day

Lower fat milk and lactose reduced milk must be available for drinking at least once a day during school hours



Meat, fish, eggs, beans

and other non-dairy sources of protein

A portion of food from this group every day

A portion of meat or poultry on three or more days each week

Oily fish once or more every three weeks

For vegetarians, a portion of non-dairy protein on three or more days each week

A meat or poultry product (manufactured or homemade, and meeting the legal requirements) no more than once each week in primary schools and twice each week in secondary schools*

Food provided outside lunch

• Fruit and/or vegetables available in all school food outlets

• No savoury crackers and breadsticks

• No cakes, biscuits, pastries or desserts (except yoghurt or fruit-based desserts containing at least 50% fruit)



Starchy food

One or more wholegrain varieties of starchy food each week

One or more portions of food from this group every day

Three or more different starchy foods each week

Starchy food cooked in fat or oil no more than two days each week*

Bread - with no added fat or oil - must be available every day



Healthier drinks*

Free, fresh drinking water at all times

The only drinks permitted are:

- Plain water (still or carbonated)
- Lower fat milk or lactose reduced milk
- Fruit or vegetable juice (max 150 mls)
- Plain soya, rice or oat drinks enriched with calcium; plain fermented milk (e.g. yoghurt) drinks
- Unsweetened combinations of fruit or vegetable juice with plain water (still or carbonated)
- Combinations of fruit juice and lower fat milk or plain yoghurt, plain soya, rice or oat drinks enriched with calcium; cocoa and lower fat milk; flavoured lower fat milk
- Tea, coffee, hot chocolate

Combination drinks are limited to a portion size of 330ml. They may contain added vitamins or minerals, but no more than 5% added sugars or honey or 150mls fruit juice. Fruit juice combination drinks must be at least 45% fruit juice

