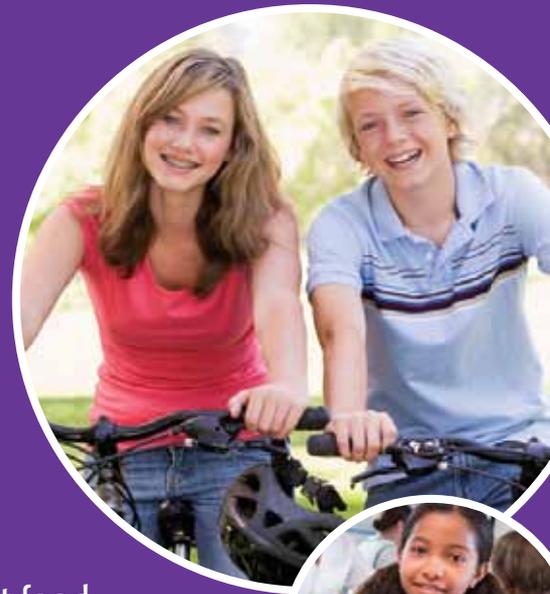




While schools will play the lead in this, it is important to remember that

- parents and other people who look after children have the biggest part to play in what children eat
- children have the right to know what food is good for them and to make choices about what they eat
- for some children food is particularly important because they have a disability or an allergy or because of their culture or religion
- this policy will only work if schools support children's emotional health and also encourage regular exercise

This policy is about bringing together all the work that has already been done to improve food in schools and to set out the things that schools **must do** in future and the things that schools **might decide to do** in future.



Things schools must do

Schools must take a 'whole school approach' to all the food that is provided and eaten in school. That means talking to everyone in the school and school community to make sure everyone is working together and not doing different things. They should have a written policy by the end of the 2013/14 school year.

Example of rules about school meals

- At least two portions of fruit and vegetables must be available for lunch.
- Rice and pasta must be available at least once a week.
- Pies, casseroles and stews must have at least half a portion of vegetables per serving.
- Milk and water to drink must be available every day.
- Fish should be available at least once a week.
- Fried and high fat foods such as chips and garlic bread must not be served more than twice a week.

School meals

When schools provide lunches they must keep to rules, known as 'the standards', that have been set out about what types of food to provide, and how often.

Food must be provided for children who have particular needs because of disability, allergy, religion or culture - and schools, school caterers, pupils and parents should talk about what is needed.

The Department of Education provides free school meals to some children who need them. 21% of children who could have free meals don't take them. Sometimes children find it hard to take the free meal because they don't like to stand out as different. Schools should find ways to make it easier to get the free meal without embarrassment and encourage anyone who gets a free meal to eat it.

3



Food and drinks sold in schools

We know that making sure that food in school meals is healthy isn't enough. We also need to make sure that only healthier food and snacks are available from breakfast clubs, afterschool clubs, tuck-shops and vending machines in schools.

We have already made some rules about other food and drinks provided by schools.

Example of rules about other food and drinks

- No sweets, chocolate or crisps should be sold in schools.
- Water, milk, unsweetened fruit juices as well as yogurt or milk drinks with less sugar are available to buy.
 - No cakes or biscuits (unless at lunchtime).





Things schools might decide to do

As every school has different circumstances, schools are free to make up their own minds about some things like:

- What food and drinks children can bring into schools as packed lunches or snacks at break time
- How long lunchtime is
- How pupils queue up for food
- If pupils are allowed to go out of school at lunchtime
- What food companies they allow to advertise in the school

It is very important that schools talk to parents and pupils before they decide on what their rules might be.

Nursery schools

Nursery schools that get money from the Department for Education must follow this food in schools policy.

Where you can get help

The Department of Education is helping by giving extra money to the School Meals Service to help catering staff to produce healthier meals using more fresh ingredients.

The Department of Education and The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety are helping by paying for a regional Food in Schools Coordinator, to help school caterers and schools make sure that only healthier food is available in schools.

There is guidance available for school caterers and schools on meeting the standards:

www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/nutritional-standards-school-lunches-guide-implementation

www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/nutritional-standards-other-food-and-drinks-schools-guide-implementation

www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/stop-look-and-cook-recipe-book-schools-northern-ireland

There is guidance to schools on every part of the Food in Schools policy

www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/school-food-essential-guide

There are lots of resources available to help schools teach about healthy eating and healthy lifestyles

www.deni.gov.uk/index/support-and-development-2/5-schools_meals/food-in-schools-resources.htm

Parents can get more information about healthy lunches on these sites:

www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/are-you-packing-healthy-lunch-english-and-irish.

www.nidirect.gov.uk/index/information-and-services/health-and-well-being/eat-well/healthy-eating-for-children.htm.

www.nhs.uk/Livewell/childhealth6-15/Pages/Lighterlunchboxes.aspx.

